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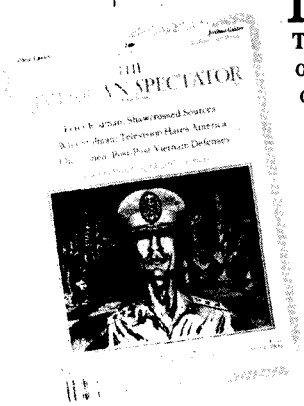

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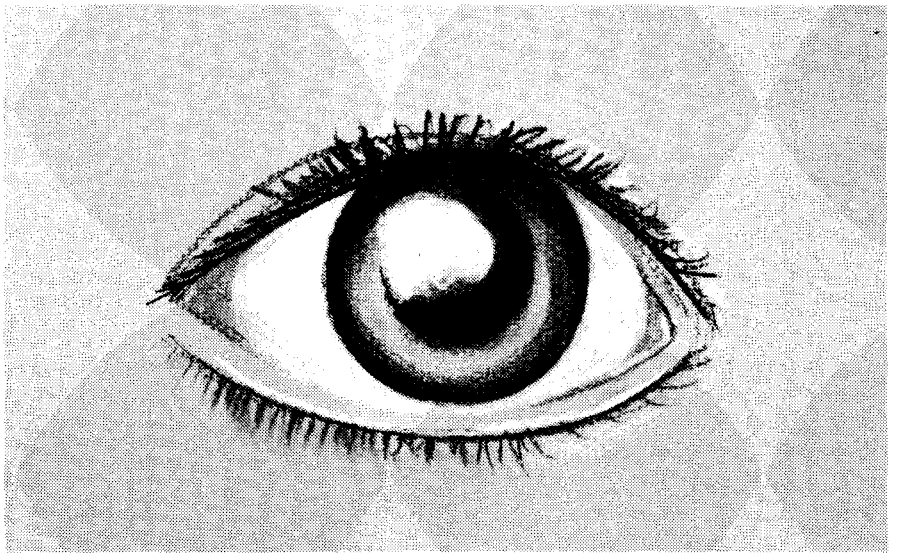

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I rate the four main agencies of education in my life—schools, libraries, magazines, and bookstores—in the following order of importance: 1. bookstores, 2. magazines, 3. libraries, 4. schools. To consider the last first, I had better own up right off that I was never other than a mediocre student, though mediocre may be overstating it. After acquiring the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic by about age eight, I went into roughly a decade-long intellectual snooze, from which I arose a trifle cranky but otherwise refreshed. By the time I arrived at university, I was some two or three hundred furlongs behind the front-runners of my generation and spent the better part of my time playing, to alter the sports metaphor, catch-up ball. On various occasions since then I have met professors who taught me, and not a single one among them can remember me as a student. This is not so surprising; I scarcely remember being there myself.

While I am thankful for libraries, the next of the educational agencies in my life, I have chiefly functioned in relation to them as a small-time benefactor. I borrow their books, can be relied upon to bring them back late, and consequently am made to pay fair but nonetheless irritating fines. My record here isn't as impressive as that of a friend of mine who once kept a book on the Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata out of his branch library for fourteen years and, when bringing it back, decided not to take advantage of his right to renew it, though, he tells me, he never did finish it. (I suppose that this qualifies for what is nowadays called a "slow read.") My style with libraries is steadier; I go in for lots of two- and three-dollar fines, and every so often, just to show them I am no cheapskate, I will lose a book and have to fork over fifteen or twenty dollars to replace it.

As for working in libraries, it is not for me. The sight of stacks turns me into instant Oblomov; I have only to enter a library to long for my pajamas and robe. The library at the university where I teach offers carrels—small monastic cells for study on the premises—to its faculty, but I would sooner serve time in a minimum-security prison than use them. I like a certain amount of distraction when I work: doorbells ringing, radios playing in the background, noise coming in from the street. Even as I finish this paragraph, I hope my telephone will ring.

Magazines are something else. Around the age of twenty I discovered the intellectual and literary magazines—*Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, *Encounter*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, the British weeklies—and I have read them ever since. They were especially helpful to me as a young man who himself one day wanted to write. This was during a time when second-rate books were not taught at universities. Reading great authors is the best method of education; but for someone who wishes to write, they can be discouraging. How after all at age twenty—or at age sixty—can one hope to write like Hazlitt, Macaulay, or T. S. Eliot, not to speak of Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare? Maybe, though, with diligence, one could some day write for these magazines, or so I felt. The intellectual magazines gave me not only some sense of what the issues, questions, and problems of the day were but also a sense of a continuing tradition. I still read them—and, I hope, learn from them—for the same reasons. For the most

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part, my great teachers have not been professors but writers and editors.

I am, then, something of an autodidact, though *autodidact* is a word I have never completely understood. Apart from people who have trained for one or another of the professions, or have been taught by two or three professors in a field of fairly narrow specialization, who among us isn't an autodidact—that is, who among us isn't self-taught? And the place where most self-teaching begins, or at any rate has begun for me, is in bookstores. Books remain the essential tools of education and bookstores the shops where they are most commonly acquired. One learns something about books from teachers, and a good deal more from the toutings of friends and from articles about books in magazines, but it is in bookstores that one picks up most of all, by wandering among shelves, making discoveries, being serendipitous but with a purpose. A. J. Liebling used to say that the first thing he investigated when he visited a new city was the taste of its drinking water and the quality of its newspapers. For me one of the tests of a good city is the quality of its bookstores.

If there were any bookstores in the neighborhood in which I grew up, I do not remember them. Drugstores used to rent out popular novels for, as I recall, a nickel a day. Paperback books had not yet become widespread. I remember seeing an occasional western novel or detective story in a paperback edition, though at the time they were usually referred to as pocket books (Pocket Books, which has a kangaroo for its imprint, is also the name of a paperback publisher). Not being a reader, I had no reason to go into a bookstore. The Board of Education of the City of Chicago supplied our schoolbooks. In fact, I don't believe I set foot in a bookshop of any sort, new or used, before the age of eighteen.

Someone who scarcely set foot outside a bookshop before he was eighteen was Anatole France. Père France was the proprietor of the Librairie de France, one of the best of the nineteenth-century Parisian bookshops. Anatole France grew up in the apartment above and spent a great deal of time in his father's shops. In 1853 the Librairie de France moved from No. 15 quai Malaquais to No. 9 quai Voltaire, along which bookstalls were ranged, and this caused Anatole France to remark that, as a boy, he had the use of a library fully three-quarters of a mile long. As a child, he played at being a bookseller the way other children played at being a soldier or a doctor. He learned bookbinding and repair; and later in life, when he would see a "wounded" book, he would acquire it, return it to good condition, and give it to a friend who would, in effect, give it a good home. He was a great reader of books, but he was also aware of their physical attraction. In *La Vie littéraire* he wrote: "There is no true love without some sensuality. One can only find true happiness through books if one likes to caress them. [Here I pull on the cord to signal the driver to let me off, for this last statement of France's is rather further than I care to go.] I can recognize a true bibliophile by the way in which he handles a book. [Here I reboard the bus, for this seems to me true.]"

I wish I had had the young Anatole France with me when I had gone into my first bookstores. Entering a bookstore can be quite as bewildering, even scarifying for an unbookish novice, as entering a bordello can be for a young divinity student. There are so many wrong moves, so many potential mistakes, one can make. One wants above all to seem at home, which in a bookstore is not to seem unlettered or otherwise give evidence of one's natural barbarity. My own great fears were mispronouncing an author's name or getting a title wrong. I recall especially worrying about the correct pronunciation of Truman Capote's last name—was that final *e* sounded or not? The chances for seeming oafish in a bookstore seemed to me very great. One didn't have to read many books to recognize that bookstores could be minefields of potential snobbishness; and above all one didn't wish to come off as *nouveau intellectuel*, the mental equivalent of seeming *nouveau riche*.

Bookstores could also be centers for some very strange behavior. One of the first bookstores I frequented, a small but obviously highbrow shop in the neighborhood of the university I attended, was run by a man whom I wouldn't exactly called irascible since he seemed permanently irasced. He scowled, he growled, he was in a perpetual pet. But his shop contained some awfully fine books, including a large stock of English Penguins marked "Not for Sale in the U.S.A." I was in his shop one evening when a tall man wear-

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ing a beret asked where he kept his books on mathematics. "Over there," the owner grunted, pointing toward the far wall but scarcely looking up. When the man in the beret returned two or three minutes later to ask if he had any other mathematics titles in the shop, the owner rose to his feet, curtly announced "Shop's closed," pulled a cord that extinguished the one large fluorescent lighting fixture that lit the place, and plunged us all into darkness. I returned to the shop many times after this incident, but I made a mental note, in italics, never to ask him a question. When I bought a book, I even went out of my way to pay him in exact change.

Traditionally, booksellers have differed from other shopkeepers by their interest in, and in many instances possession of, culture. But culture, as those of us who have for any length of time sojourned in its purlieus have discovered, does not necessarily, all advertisements to the contrary notwithstanding, sweeten a person's temper. Sweet-tempered people—most famously, Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier in Paris in the twenties—have been booksellers; and I have met a number of kindly and extremely helpful booksellers in my own time. Yet, even though running a good bookshop seems to me one of the finest things a man or woman can do—for it involves transmitting knowledge and thereby serving the cause of civilization—among many booksellers I have known I note an edge of disappointment. Many would rather produce books than sell them; some are, for one complex reason or another, unfulfilled scholars; and a few perhaps feel too keenly their own marginality.

Certainly the range of types who work in bookshops is various. Some booksellers have a specialty. The owner of one bookshop I go to regularly knows a great deal about philosophy; once, when a customer asked him where his books on the philosophy of religion were, he was heard to reply: "Sir, there is no philosophy of religion. Religion has been the death of philosophy," which is probably more information than the customer bargained for. I have a friend who asked a clerk at Scribner's Book Store in New York if he had in stock *The Courage of Turtles*, to which he responded, "Lady, I ain't got the strength of a rabbit." A young black man at the Strand Book Store of whom I once inquired about the novels of Chaim Grade proved not only to have known about them but to have read all of them. The owner of a quite good used-book store in a neighborhood adjoining my own has never shown the least trace of a hint of a fog of a clue of having read a single book. Then there is the owner of a really superior used-book store I know whose owner, a Yale Ph.D. in history, is at first meetings a most taciturn New Englander. I was myself only able to break the ice with him when one day, after selling me three fairly thick volumes, he asked if I wanted them wrapped. "No," I said. "That's all right. I'll just read them here." This provoked a very small, a very quick smile. As I say, a wide range of types.

Owning a bookshop appears to be a fairly common fantasy. (Owning a successful bar is another such fantasy.) The attraction is not difficult to understand. To be surrounded by books—and books, as has been said often enough, do furnish a room—and to make one's living from people who are interested in books sound a pleasing way to pass one's days. Such a fantasy must have been the origin of another used-book store in my neighborhood, one run by a man of middle years who was formerly an advertising executive. At least I espy the origins of a fantasy in the tone and tenor of his establishment. Couches and chairs are deployed about the shop; at different places dishes of mints or hard candies have been set out; on occasional Sundays amateur chamber music ensembles perform there. The hope, clearly, is to make the bookshop a comfortable place where like-minded people can gather to talk about things they love. Surely there have been less destructive fantasies.

Still, if an antidote to the bookshop fantasy is wanted, perhaps no stronger potion is available than a gloomy little essay of George Orwell's entitled "Bookshop Memories." Orwell goes right to work on the fantasy; his first sentence reads: "When I worked in a second-hand bookshop—so easily pictured, if you don't work in one, as a kind of paradise where charming old gentlemen browse eternally among calf-bound folios—the thing that chiefly struck me was the rarity of really bookish people." Orwell goes on from here to attack the clientele of the bookshops of his day: the vague-minded women looking for birthday presents for their nephews or for

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invalids; the people looking for another copy of a book they had read forty years before whose title or author they cannot remember; the sad people who try to sell you books no bookseller could possibly use; the people who place large orders and never arrive to pick them up; the "not quite certifiable lunatics" who "tend to gravitate towards bookshops, because a bookshop is one of the few places where you can hang about for a long time without spending any money." Orwell's description of the atmosphere in bookshops is no less gloomy. Bookshops are, according to Orwell, "horribly cold in winter," and "books give off more and nastier dust than any other class of objects yet invented"; more cheery news still, "the top of a book is the place where every bluebottle [fly] prefers to die." Finally, Orwell assures us, in that impressively confident manner he had, that working in a bookshop will eventually result in one's learning to dislike books. "Seen in the mass, five or ten thousand at a time, books were boring and even slightly sickening." Ah, that George, always a million laughs.

I don't say that what Orwell wrote was untrue, but, his having written his essay in 1936 during a time when London was perhaps never scruffier, its truth has certain limitations. Bookshops can be dreary places—the one Orwell worked in doubtless was—but they needn't be, and most, in my experience, aren't. Orwell remarked that "on the whole" he wouldn't care to be a "bookseller *de métier*," which is a negligible loss for bookselling and a considerable gain for literature. Neither, I must own, would I care to be a bookseller—not only because I like what I do at present but because I have an aversion to anything having to do with an inventory. My grandfather used to say that one of the nice things about doing intellectual work is that at least it doesn't tie you to an inventory. He ought to have known; he himself, who longed so to devote his days to teaching and writing and intellectual things, was for the better part of his life hostage to the inventories of several not very successful businesses. But let me tell you a tragicomic story about an inventory and our family's one brief undistinguished fling at being booksellers.

When my grandfather retired, freed at last from his wretched businesses, he devoted himself to things of the mind, not least among them a book of discursive learning in which, in Hebrew and in Yiddish, he commented on Biblical passages and on other Judaical matters. This book was published by subscription in my grandfather's home city of Montreal, with my father paying a goodly share of the publication costs. My father also helped his father out in his retirement with a modest monthly stipend; and once my grandfather's book was printed, my father suggested that he, who was out in the business world, could perhaps sell some copies for him. The copies were sent and stored in our basement. Each month, when my father sent his father his stipend, he would append a postscript: "Sold three copies of the book this month—an additional $15 enclosed." "Five copies of the book sold—all to a single customer—check for $25 enclosed." "An unusually good month for book sales—nine copies sold, an extra $45 added to check."

Of course, my father never actually sold a single copy of his father's book; nor did he try. The market for such a book was scarcely teeming. Whenever we had a visitor at our house who read Yiddish or Hebrew, which wasn't very frequently, my father would send me down to the basement to fetch a copy to give to the visitor. Meanwhile, his letters to his father continued to contain the inevitable postscripts: "The check for $35 represents seven copies of the book sold." "The check for $30 is for book sales." "Book sold briskly this month—$40 extra added." Then one day a United Parcel Service truck dropped off two heavy boxes at our house. These were followed by a letter that arrived the next day from my grandfather. "My dear son, I assume your stock of my book must be running quite low. I have therefore sent, by United Parcel, an additional fifty copies. Let me know when you need more."

Does one have to be a writer to find pathos hidden in the crevices of that largely comic story? Perhaps not. Perhaps, too, I can make plain why it is that, whenever I have recently published a book, I make it a point never to go into, or indeed even gaze at the window of, a store selling new books. Having a recently published book changes the nature of one's relation to bookstores. One is no longer a customer, a browser, a disinterested flaneur seeking a slender volume that might capture one's fancy—one is instead all too interested.

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When a recently published author passes a bookstore, the first question he asks is, Why isn't my book displayed prominently in the window? As he enters the store, the second question he asks is, Why isn't my book on the bestseller table? (Do you suppose the fact that it isn't a bestseller could have anything to do with it?) The third question is, Why is it shelved under Sociology or under Self-Help? The fourth question, when it isn't found there, is, Why isn't it at least shelved under Sociology or under Self-Help—why, that is, isn't it even in the store? The fifth question is, Why do I have the publisher I do, since he obviously doesn't go in for distributing books? (Here I am reminded of the avant-garde publisher who, when his authors used to complain that they could never find their books in bookstores, used to reply: "Well, great gods, you don't want just anyone to read your book, do you?") The sixth question is, Is it too late in life for me to find another line of work?

When my first book was published, I frequently found myself going into bookstores to see how the little gem was doing. "What's your name again?" was not an infrequent response to my queries. "What's the title of your book again?" was another popular response. Of a later book, I recall a particularly painful telephone call. "Aristides, it's Stan. I'm out here at the Old Orchard Shopping Center Kroch & Brentano's trying to buy a copy of your new book. They never heard of it. They called the main store downtown. Nobody there ever heard of it either. They're going to call me later about it. I'll get back to you on this." "Stan," I said, trying like mad to repress the rising tremolo in my voice, "please, don't get back to me on it." Some things in life are better not known, and the fate of one's own books in bookstores, at least for the non-best-selling author, is one of them.

Not that I go into as many new bookstores nowadays as I used to. Someone once said that you can either read books or write them, and that you can't do both. I would take this a step further and say that you can either buy books or read them. I utter this profundity upon making a rough estimate that I have probably not read fully 20 to 25 percent of the books I now own. Then, too, new bookstores do not seem quite so interesting to me as they once did. I came along too late for the time when bookstores were suitable hangouts for writers, such as the old A. C. McClurg Bookstore on Wabash Avenue in Chicago was during the early decades of this century. I know some very intelligent booksellers with whom it is a pleasure to talk, but a sense of community is not something I seek in a bookshop. Apart from the company of three or four good friends, I haven't found a sense of community anywhere else either—and this vaunted quality of community, I am beginning to feel, may be even more elusive than Jimmy Durante's famous lost chord.

What I have found is some extraordinary behavior on the part of bookstore clientele. I recall a scene in a plush bookshop in Chicago in which an older woman, one Mrs. Thompson by name, apparently a regular customer, informed a clerk that she and her husband were soon to be off for a three-week holiday to St. Croix. "While on holiday with Dr. Thompson," she announced, in a voice that sounded as if it ought to have belonged to one of those older women in a Peter Arno cartoon, "I generally read three books a week. Could you, then, send round nine books to our apartment sometime before Friday?" After she left, I hung back to watch the clerk gather up the books for her, at least four of which were very expensive, fully caffeinated, coffee-table tomes. In his place, I am not sure I should have done any differently. *Caveat lector.*

New bookstores have become less interesting owing to circumstances not entirely within their control. Chief among these is their relentless contemporaneity, which can be mildly depressing. Because of the vast number of books being published, because of a contractual arrangement that allows booksellers to return unsold books to their publishers, new books have an increasingly short shelf life. Stock in new bookstores is regularly returned and replenished by new stock. Try, for example, to obtain a clothbound edition of a respectably good book published as recently as two years ago. It is an extremely difficult thing to do. With the fairly fast turnover of goods now the rule of the day in publishing, such a book may not even be available from the publisher, for it could well have gone off to the pulpery—the equivalent, for books, of the glue factory to which old horses were sent.

In the essay "Bookshop Memories," from which I quoted earlier, George Orwell called the book business "a human trade which is

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not capable of being vulgarized beyond a certain point." He also said that "the combines can never squeeze the small independent bookseller out of existence." It may be impolite to find George Orwell guilty of faulty prophecy in 1984, but neither statement holds up nowadays. We know bookselling is capable of being extravagantly vulgarized, and we know that the combines have squeezed many a small bookseller out of existence. Being against such combines as B. Dalton, Waldenbooks, and others may seem snobbish, even perversely archaic, on my part. I know that these supermarket book chains do get more books sold, and, by implication, as a result of their being in business, more books do get read; in many instances, they even get the books to their readers at cheaper prices. This may all be so; let us grant that it is. What I dislike about these supermarket booksellers is that their stores, devoid as they are of surprise, are devoid as well of pleasure. I also dislike their blasted efficiency.

Efficiency, so much to be valued in so many phases of life, ought not to be a primary value in others. Efficiency has no place in friendship, in love, in raising children, in the creation of much art, and it may have a limited utility, too, in the selling of books. Not that I, that raging beast, an author, don't mutter a vicious and highly rhythmic Spanish curse (in English) against the inefficiency of the book business when I learn that not a single copy of a newly published book of mine has made its way to such not entirely obscure cities as San Diego or Minneapolis; in fact, I do. Still, I think that a bookstore ought to have a certain disarray, a jumble, room for the odd and even largely unwanted item. "A bookshop, in order to be good," writes Edward Shils in an essay entitled "The Bookshop in America," "must have a large stock of books for which there is not likely to be a great demand but for which there will be an occasional demand." I could not agree more. If you are going to call it a bookshop, there ought at least to be a copy of, say, Ruskin around the joint.

Some new bookstores partially make up for their depressing quality of too strict contemporaneity by carrying a gorgeous array of paperback books. This helps. But, especially given the price of so-called quality paperbacks nowadays, I almost always prefer to have the same book in a clothbound edition. (Forgive me if I don't say "hardback"; turtles and armadillos have hardbacks, not books.) It is for this reason, among others, that to me used-book stores are so much more enticing. One never knows quite what one will find in a used-book store, which is what makes them, to the book-crazed, such exciting places.

I was extremely lucky when, in my early twenties, I worked in New York on a magazine whose offices were just off Union Square and hence only a few blocks from the great used-book stores of Fourth Avenue and University Place. I was then coming into my passion for literature and here, set out before me, were these vast emporiums of books. Each day on my lunch hour I would rush off to these shops; each day I would make a fresh discovery of some book I had not hitherto known about. I was in the splendid position of a young sailor whose ship has just pulled into the most exotic of ports—except that, figuratively speaking, my ship pulled into port fully five days a week. A married man with infant children, knowing myself not entirely in control, I would leave my wallet in my desk and usually not allow myself to take more than ten dollars along with me.

Fourth Avenue and University Place were then ideal locations for used-book stores. The economics of the used-book business is such that these shops require locations where there is high traffic and low rent. You will find no used-book stores on Rodeo Drive, nor on Fifth Avenue in the Fifties, nor on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago; nor will you find any in glittering suburban shopping centers. The ideal location for a used-book shop is a neighborhood gone slightly to decay—"a marginal area of a central business district," as Professor Shils has written, "or the university community." Himself a relentless and intercontinental forager in bookshops, Professor Shils knows whereof he speaks. Of his own bookish sojourning, he writes: "My case is an extreme one, and there are perhaps few people in my generation, more or less in their right minds and heavily engaged with all sorts of duties, who have spent so much time in bookshops as I have. I have talked with booksellers of every kind, angular Brahmins, mad *Ostjuden*, motherly widows, elegant patricians, sweet mice, and cagy and distrustful touts." Spoken like a man with true book fever.

Unless one goes in search of a specific title,

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one enters a used-book shop in the quiet but perpetual hope of being pleasantly surprised. One hopes to find that extraordinary book, long out of print, that one long ago all but despaired of ever finding (Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm*); or to discover a book whose existence one hadn't even known about (Mark Pattison's book on Milton in the English Men of Letters series); or to come upon a book one had heard of but never really expected to have a chance to own (Max Beerbohm's book of drawings, *Rossetti and His Circle*); or to fill in volumes that are missing from sets of books one already owns (Élie Halévy's *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*). Of course it nearly goes without saying that one hopes to find these things at laughably low prices.

One is always making odd, sometimes touching discoveries in used-book stores. Not infrequently I have come across a book, usually some classic work in an edition republished in the teens or twenties of this century—the poems of Keats, say, or the essays of Montaigne—inscribed as a gift from a father to his daughter and evidently given away by the grandchildren. More embarrassingly, I have found books signed by the author to a friend (not, apparently, as good a friend as the author thought, or he wouldn't have sold the book). When I haunted the used-book shops of lower Manhattan, I often used to inquire after the books of A. J. Liebling. (All of them, I believe, are now available in paperback.) I never found any of them, and after a while I was told by more than one bookseller that Liebling himself used to come round and buy them up, no doubt wishing to ensure that these books found a good home—his own. The poet L. E. Sissman wrote a brief poem about finding copies of his own book, *Dying: An Introduction*, remaindered for one shilling at Foyle's, the London bookshop. The last four lines of Sissman's poem run:

> And there, a snip under a blackleg sign,
> "These books reduced to 1s.," there is mine,
> *Dying: An Introduction*. Well, if you
> Preach about dying, you must practice, too.

I occasionally see a book of my own in a used-book shop. The sight of it is a bit discouraging, even though, on the shelf, it will sometimes have a book by Jane Austen or St. Augustine for company. I take its presence in a used-book shop to mean that someone has decided that he can do quite nicely without owning my book, thank you all the same. Recently I noted a copy of my last book on the shelves of a used-book shop three weeks before the book was to be officially published. Talk about bad omens; talk about intimations of mortality.

For all the potential delights they provide, there is nonetheless something a little sad about a used-book store. The sadness has to do with the shattered fantasies, the broken dreams, of writers who, while writing their books, certainly never intended them to end up on the shelves of used-book stores. Doubtless many among these writers hoped their books would garner for them fame, money, and the love of beautiful women. (It was Freud who said that the artist gives up the pursuit of fame, money, and the love of beautiful women for the sake of his art, through which he hopes to win fame, money, and the love of beautiful women.) Instead these books are now gathering dust and—in the case of those books unfortunate enough to have wound up in the bookshop in which George Orwell worked—dead bluebottle flies. Of course, many of the books in used-book stores were bestsellers in their day and may well have realized their authors' fantasies, but their appearance in these shops is a clear signal that that day is done. Used-book stores, then, function in part as a retirement home for authorly hopes.

While being sold off at cut-rate may be dismaying to authors, buying books at cut-rate has always been one of the great lures of used-book shops for normally greedy book buyers. Harold Laski, in many of his letters to Justice Holmes, reported fantastic book bargains acquired in the shops of London and New York. Laski's relationship with the truth was not strictly constant on his part, to put the matter somewhat delicately, but here is one such report he made to Justice Holmes:

> I have had some fine luck here this last week. Item, Roger (sic) Wiseman, *The Excellency of the Civil Law* (1656).... Item, also a *Parte of a Register* (1590). This is very rare.... Item, a volume of pamphlets on the Wilkes controversy which belonged originally to Woodfall, Wilkes' printer and has some notes in by him.... But my best find is

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really more interesting than anything I have come across in the last few years. It was a bundle containing thirty unprinted speeches delivered by John Stuart Mill to the London Debating Society in his own autograph.

How much of this is true it would be difficult to say, but I hope you will believe me when I say that I first acquired the two handsome Harvard University Press volumes of *The Holmes-Laski Letters* at the Strand Book Store in 1963 for five dollars. At that time, five dollars seemed a heavy outlay. Most novels in used-book stores could be acquired, in clothbound editions, for a dollar or two, and many for less than that; a serious biography or historical work tended to go for three or four dollars. I remember being greatly miffed at having to pay seven bucks for *A Pushcart at the Curb*, a collection of the poems of John Dos Passos, because it was a first edition. (I had not then, nor have I now, the least interest in first editions.) But there were great bargains to be had. A young man walking into a used-book shop with twenty dollars in his pocket cut a fine figure.

Palmy days, those, but, like most palmy days, they are now gone. The best seller of used books I know has a single but major flaw—he knows exactly what his books are worth and gets it. His stock, rich and handsomely arrayed, loses some of its piquancy for me through my knowledge that I shall not be able, in effect, to steal anything from him. Worse news, a few used-book sellers I know have begun to mark the inside flap of their books, where they list the price, either "First Edition" or "Out of Print," both labels entitling them to anywhere from two to five dollars extra for the book, which in some cases is a very recent one. (How fine to own a first edition of, say, Joseph Heller's *Good as Gold*!) This trend of marking the flap of a book seems to me to bode ill; it reminds me of nothing so much as those cars on used-car lots that have marked across their windshields, "One Owner" or "Low Mileage." Can we look forward to the day when one will be greeted at the entrance to a used-book store by a man in a red blazer, a toothpick in his mouth, who tells you he has a real cream puff of an edition of Epictetus, owned by a little old lady who only read it after church on Sundays? Will used books one day, as used cars are currently, be referred to as "previously owned" books?

Perhaps I go too far. But then I worry about the fate of bookstores, rather like a grumbling elderly alumnus who is unhappy about the turn his beloved school is taking. Bookstores are my alma mater, and I hate to see them lose the character that gave them their lovely traditional quality. Like everyone who reads and writes, I feel I have a further stake in them. They are the retirement home for much of what I and a great many other people write and, eventually, the cemetery as well—but a cemetery from which at least partial, or occasional, resurrection is possible. If writing and reading is to survive in roughly the form we know it now, so must bookstores, new and used. R.I.P.: Read in Peace.

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A Legacy

CARL FRANKEL

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, two men with robbery or perhaps only good times on their minds broke into my parents' Bedford Hills, New York, house and shot my father and mother to death as they slept. They then went to the bar and helped themselves to a drink or two. Having thus refreshed themselves, they left the bottles lying on the floor and went on to a neighboring house, where they killed two more people.

This essay is a meditation on my parents' deaths. As such, it offers no answers. Sometimes there are no answers, no simple safe declaratory ground between the two extremes of humility and imprecation. Nonetheless, one cannot help but explore and examine in the hope that, in the face of an absurd and ultimately inexplicable act such as this, one will somehow come up with a nugget of understanding that enables one to live with what happened.

Two men sneaked into my parents' home and killed my mother and father. While I cannot help but search for meaning, I know that any meaning I uncover will have been plucked not from the event itself but from out of my head. That fact, though, does not make the act of searching self-deceptive or ignoble. One has to struggle, one has to search for meaning, if one wishes to survive with any sense of dignity or purpose. Perhaps it is true, given that it takes us nowhere but back and forth within our minds, that the search is absurd; perhaps, indeed, the will to survive and to have dignity and purpose are absurd too. But the alternative to those things is despair, and that to me and most people is unacceptable. The search for meaning has a strictly pragmatic aspect; absurd though the search may be, it can provide myths that keep one going. And when all is said and done, when all the talk of absurdity and survival has ended, keeping going is really the goal.

My parents' murder is devoid of meaning unless it can be found to *stand for* something. Unless the act can be given a place within a symbolic domain, it is empty. The same applies for my father's life and for my mother's. So: In the search for meaning, it is to the world of symbol—to the world of metaphor—that we must turn.

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In this case, it is almost too easy to find a symbolic structure within which to place the murders. My father was Charles Frankel, former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, long-time professor of philosophy at Columbia University, eloquent and prominent spokesman for liberal ideals. It is no hard task to put him in the position of standing for something. That is precisely what he did, by choice, for all his adult years, and with enough success to have become by the end of his life for many (including, perhaps, himself) something approaching the walking embodiment of certain liberal ideals.

The symbols that fit my father applied to my mother too. She was with him every inch of the way in his struggles; she was his companion and his sidekick, the sine qua non of his strength. What he believed in and fought for, she in her less public way believed in and fought for too.

To assert that in my father's personality and beliefs he stood for the exact opposite of everything that his murderers—and the fact of his murder—stand for may sound simplistic, but it happens to be true. He was an inveterate optimist, a stubborn bright-side-seer; they asserted darkness and death. He was an advocate of reason and of language; they were voiceless advocates of unreason and of brute physical power.

In my mind, my father's killers have grown to represent his opposite in other ways too. My father was a spokesman for a culture—a literate, moderate, rational, classical culture. The world is changing and leaving that culture behind, and not particularly gradually. My father's killers have come to represent for me not only brutishness and unreason but also those other societal trends and forces against which my father, like a modern-day Horatio at the bridge, struggled all his life. They have come to stand, in a way, for the inexorableness of change.

And they won. They won, and he lost. That, at any rate, is what the nature of his death, which from this perspective was the culmination of a lifelong conflict, seems to tell us.

Or does it?

Perhaps he won.

If we should find that he won, that victory would provide us with our sought-after meaning, the discovery of which would be *our* victory. That would be another blow struck, like the many my father struck, against negation and death. In a sense, since through his victory he fathered it, it would be *his* contribution; and this essay, one part of his legacy.

So: Did he win?

My father was born and raised in New York City. He attended Townsend Harris High School. I have only Dad's reminiscences to go by, but from what he told me, Townsend Harris was an intellectually dynamic place; it was a school for the bright and gifted, and I am left

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with the sense of a community whose members learned to compete there, who did so delightedly and solely in the world of ideas. These were people, if I am to believe my father, who, though submerged deep in the Great Depression, never doubted themselves or their mission. They felt themselves chosen and sure of the future because of the hand they would lend to it. I look back now and wonder if perhaps it wasn't my father alone, and not his world, that he was describing—in a competitive environment that intense, there must have been laggards and doubters—but, as was so often the case with my father, the hard evidence confirms his contention; Townsend Harris's alumni rolls are dotted with eminent names.

Townsend Harris had been closed down by the time I came into the world in 1950. I was raised in the suburbs of New York City, in New City, New York. My parents had moved there after the war; close friends were living there, and I suspect the fact that he was moving into something of an artists' colony—Kurt Weill lived there, and Maxwell Anderson, and Henry Varnum Poor—served to ease any compunctions my father might have had about "moving out into the country."

Perhaps out there he found the continued stimulation he was looking for for himself; but not for his children. He felt that Rockland County was a wasteland, and that it was very unlikely that either my sister or I would get our minds satisfactorily exercised in the public educational system. When the time came, he dealt with the problem in typically energetic fashion. As she and I approached high school age, he, along with a small group of similarly concerned parents, founded a school that would admit only the bright and gifted and that, they hoped, would be an oasis in the cultural desert that they felt this suburb to be.

Dad was trying to create another Townsend Harris High.

The experiment, sadly, was less than completely successful. The classes were small, the teachers excellent and dedicated, and we were bright enough, I suppose. Nonetheless, my memories are of eraser-hockey games and switchblade fights with palette knives wielded a la James Dean. What competition there was between us took place not in the classroom but in the less highbrow worlds of Jock and Cool. Dad's world, the world of Townsend Harris High, had already been passed by.

Dad perceived himself as a thoroughly modern man. This was possible because he had a thoroughly unmodern sense of history: whereas for many of his and most of my next-generation contemporaries, modernity is a twentieth century phenomenon (one finds its roots in cubism, dada, et al.), for him two hundred years was a short enough span to qualify as modern. For my father, Voltaire and Diderot had been modern men. Dad's principles were those of the Enlightenment. He saw himself, in

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essence, as a soldier on a heroic expedition, as a voyager on a ship called Reason whose mission was to take the race of man out of the horse latitudes of blind faith and unquestioning obedience in which it had been mired ever since the fall of ancient Greece. Dad was a crusader. And, like all crusaders, he had a faith, a faith in reason; at the outset of his career, "The Faith of Reason" had been the title of his doctoral dissertation.

What distressed Dad terribly as, growing older, he surveyed the world around him was the loss of faith in his god. Perhaps Dad was a modern man; if so, during the course of his life the world became postmodern. Looking about him, Dad could tell that Reason had been consigned to the slag heap occupied by all the other worn-out faiths that preceded it. And he could tell, too, that no new faiths, either uplifting or benighting, had sprung up to replace it.

Perhaps precisely because we have no more faiths—except, perhaps, in the inevitability of our own destruction—these are gloomy times. People are fatalistic and death possessed. There is a conviction that we have been collectively asleep at the wheel, that the path of so-called reason has taken us far along the road to hell, probably past the point of no return. More and more, the feeling is taking hold that we are on the edge of a volcano that is about to explode.

In these times, Dad was an anachronism and an anomaly. Despite myself—I know the analogy is exaggerated—in my mind I cannot help but compare Dad to the man sporting a bowler hat and white-handled cane whom I once saw ambling down Fifth Avenue; a character completely out of place and a pleasure to see. Dad was not blind to the times, not at all. Perhaps precisely because he understood the mood so well, he was—he insisted on being!—an ebullient, engagé, optimistic spokesman for life and for hope, and above all for the power of optimism. It was a weapon for him, perhaps the most powerful he possessed in the war he stubbornly insisted on waging against society's despair.

As a matter of principle, Dad did not believe in unhappiness. In this regard, he was not a liberal at all; he believed that unhappiness should be ruthlessly suppressed. As far as he was concerned, the best way to deal with unhappiness was to bully it into submission. He was an optimist who saw the best and brightest side of things relentlessly. In this respect he was as stubborn as a bulldog. He believed in free will and in man's ability to determine his own destiny, both individually and collectively. Unhappiness cut into confidence; the loss of confidence cut into strength; weakness undermined free will . . . . Unhappiness stood at the crest of a slippery slope. When I was twenty, like many twenty-year-olds, I was deeply depressed. My father's answer: "Use your will!" In a variety of ways, this was how he exhorted a despairing society too.

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Dad was a baseball buff from way back. As a youngster he had dreamed of being a major leaguer and had even played freshman ball at Columbia University. Sometimes, after a long day's work, he would emerge from his study to watch a couple of innings of a Mets game on television with me. It was almost guaranteed that he would deliver himself of a few predictable comments during those brief TV-watching times of ours together. If Jesus Alou, one of the three baseball-playing Alou brothers, came to bat, Dad would say, "I call him Twitchy." And twitch Alou did, as if trying to get an ever-elusive crick out of his neck.

Dad's response to modern-day baseball fashion was predictable too. "In the old days they wore their pants legs higher," he would say. "They looked like real ballplayers then . . . ."

"Like real ballplayers then . . ." Nostalgic words. Dad wanted ballplayers who fit his image of what they should be like, and that was an old-fashioned idea. His ballplayers, the ones he had grown up with, had not only worn their pants legs high, they had played with their spikes high too. They had played tough; they had drunk tough; they had chewed nails for breakfast. They hadn't played for much money and (in Dad's eyes, at least) hadn't cared. Barnstorming had been a treat for them and they had viewed themselves as lucky guys; they were living too hard and too much on their own terms to care.

But baseball players weren't like that any more. That was Dad's regret. Now they were businessmen disguised as ballplayers—men whose main concern was what they themselves probably described as "maximizing income" and who hired teams of lawyers and accountants to make sure that they did. They had become as dull, as uninteresting as all the others whose jobs are just a means to an end, as all those who do it just for lucre. The thrill, the romance of baseball was gone.

Dad never said any of this in so many words, but he didn't need to. It was implicit in his nostalgia for the old-style trouser cuff. His complaint was that ballplayers no longer had a special identity of their own. They had gone bland, as bland as the world; they had become part of the mass society.

Not only the players had lost their individuality; the stadiums in which they played had too. We went to the Giants and Mets games at the Polo Grounds, then migrated with the Mets to Shea Stadium. While the Mets won us over—regaling us first with their incompetence, then with their heroics—they couldn't make up for the drab characterlessness of the spanking new stadium to which they had been transferred. Both Dad and I missed the Polo Grounds. We missed it for its odd, irregular contours, for its remarkable ability to reward the lucky shot and to convert the cannon blast into a blank. We missed it for Coogan's Bluff, for the generations of rapscallions (my father included) who had gotten

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to watch half a game (the outfield half, the nothing half) for free. We missed it because around the world Shea stadiums were replacing it.

And yet Dad remained dubious about the existence of a mass society. In *The Democratic Prospect*, published in 1962, he wrote: "Whether we think that the theory of a mass society is an accurate account of our condition or only the expression of a mood. . . ." And again, in a curious positive-into-negative formulation that seems at first to support those who assert the existence of a mass society but comes out doubly skeptical instead, he questioned the real existence of that nightmare vision and, beyond that, the validity of anything and everything Dionysian or melodramatic: "The vision [of a mass society] is melancholy and dramatic. Yet there is some indication that it is not wholly invented; and there is even more evidence that it haunts our minds."

That "yet"! That "some"! That "wholly"! The fact is that Dad didn't, as they say, want to know from a mass society. The reason for this is that he rejoiced in difference. Therein lay the spice, the beauty of life. During the period of student unrest in the late 1960s, I think what bothered Dad most of all—beyond the Left's often unspeakable conduct and the equally contemptible spinelessness of the liberal center—was the grand illusion that he saw running rampant through the intellectual-academic society of which he was a member: the notion that difference could be suppressed, that we were (to quote a hallowed 1960s text) "all bozos on this bus." For him it was a the-king-has-no-clothes attitude, this attempt to pretend that legitimate, undeniable differences between people just weren't there. Teachers knew more than students, they had been around longer and had studied more; there was no sense in pretending that they were all the same. Similarly, Dad could not help but be aware of the profound differences between men and women, and he found distressing and pathetic the attempt, no matter how feeble, to make the two sexes somehow fungible. In the name of equality, legitimate and life-enhancing differences were being expunged.

This conviction, that all people were fundamentally the same, coupled with a general disenchantment with traditional authority structures, had profound ramifications. It made the assertion of power, for no matter what reason, an assertion of inequality and, therefore, presumptively a lie. Truly egalitarian (i.e., right-thinking, decent) people could only assert power, it followed, when they did so knowing—and making it clear that they knew—that it was only a game; and formal roles, when they involved the application of power, became tolerable only in the guise of costumery and affectation. One wasn't *really*, say, a lawyer; one only dressed up as a lawyer, and then became one's real self—which is to say, unmasked and accessible, egalitarian and human—when one put on one's blue jeans at the end of the day.

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What this attitude added up to was profound ambivalence about the assertion of power and about how seriously one should take one's role in the social structure. Dad was not at all happy with this. For him, "role" had an old-fashioned meaning. It did not mean playacting, it meant what had to be done. We were part of the body politic and should welcome the opportunity to become involved in it. Dad wanted people to care about the world they were involved in (whatever world, whether Cobb's or Kant's), and he wanted them to enter the fray as he did, with a zest—with spikes high.

From his perspective, the newfangled alienation from what one did was doubly harmful. It dislocated the individual, leaving him or her on forever shifting sands, and it also undermined society's morale and thus threatened its foundations. It was far better for a ballplayer to define himself as a ballplayer, even if it meant a cap on possibilities, than to have no sense of himself at all.

Dad learned early, virtually in the cradle, that the main reason one experiences things is in order to talk about them afterward. This was a hallmark of the culture he was born into—verbal, gregarious, articulate. The first order of reality, as it were, was not to be found in the apprehending of the thing, which was a private, solitary act, but in the social group—in the sharing of reactions afterward. One went to the theater (of course one did!), but reality came when one talked (or wrote) about it afterward. And that being the case, the best way to experience the event was as a journalist or critic—taking notes, charting reactions, comparing with other texts, and so on. Dad apprehended things with his entire intellectual apparatus "on."

In recent years, this way of perceiving things has fallen into disrepute. It is condemned as unsympathetic, as overly intellectual, and worst of all, as judgmental. It is better, current convention tells us, to turn off that commentating machine called Mind. One should relax, one should remain passive and allow oneself with one's entire being to merge with the thing being apprehended. To the extent that one succeeds at this task, it can be argued, it becomes impossible to talk about the experience afterward. Dancers are reputed to be inarticulate. Perhaps this is true because they experience things, not in order to talk about them, but to be able to express them with their bodies.

We are now moving into the age of the dancer. I am not speaking now of dancers' artistry or dedication or sense of beauty, but rather of a culture that elevates the "merge school" of apprehension and denigrates Dad's note-taking one. It is okay, we learn today, to experience something for the sake of the experience itself. This is not hedonism as much as a reaction to the sense of loss, of separateness, that inevitably attaches

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itself to a life conducted in the constant company of reason. But there is more. Implicit in this romantic approach is an assertion that there is nothing to be afraid of in cutting one's ties with the social group and moving into the uncharted realms of personal experience. Aloneness becomes allowable; privacy becomes permissible; and, as an outgrowth of this mode of apprehension, inarticulateness becomes "in." If a tree falls in my forest and I can't talk about it, did it happen? The answer today is a resounding yes. And this particular affirmation, coupled with the general decline of literate culture, is spelling the end of Dad's way of perceiving things.

In more ways than one, then, the world was moving away from Dad. The world was moving away from him, and he was standing still. In another sense, though, it was Dad who was the forward-moving one. It was his way to respond to threat with attack; in fact, it was the only way he knew. In the face of aggression, in the face of all experience, he was a forward-moving man.

Examples of this abound. Confronted by a wasteland of a suburb, he founded a school to fill the void. Faced with the decline of academic standards in the late 1960s, he founded the International Conference on the Future of the University. Concerned with the declining role of the humanities, he founded the National Humanities Center.

Even in the face of overwhelming odds, he refused to give up on what he believed in. In the end the odds were irrelevant—the struggle was what counted.

The murderers came into my parents' bedroom. Dad had a bad back and was sleeping on the floor on the other side of the bed from the door they entered by. The gun had a silencer. They shot my mother as she slept.

I imagine my father, deep in sleep, hearing a dim sound, sensing threat. Groggy with sleep, only half-aware of what was going on, he rose, probably terrifying the men, who had been unaware of his presence, who had thought Mother was alone. He came at the men. They shot him. They shot him five times in all.

Power is inexorable; so, as a general principle, is change. Also inevitable, perhaps, is the death of much of what Dad believed in and fought for all his life. Nonetheless, I view it as a victory of sorts—for my father, for me, for all of us—that he was still coming forward when he died.

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Bringing Bread

NORBERT KRAPF

We push the stroller
down Main Street

past the park the beautiful,
talented girl loved.

We remember her enthusiasm.
Our daughter points to trees

and ducks. We find it hard
to respond in spite of

the splendid autumn sun
warming our shoulders.

At the house where all
blinds are drawn, we lift

the loaf, still warm,
from the netting behind

the stroller, and place it
in the hands of the friend

offering our neighbors support.
Our daughter, who is growing

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into the pleasure of words,
frowns at all the silence.

We back away, stroll down
the lane and watch ducks

gobble bread. The bright sun
shines on our daughter's black

hair, on cold water, on us.
I stroke her hair, reassure

her when a Canada goose hisses.
At this time of inexplicable,

incomprehensible loss, all we can
muster is the most basic gift we know.

We walk home without words,
savoring the baby talk we hear.

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Astronomy in a Private Sphere

FREEMAN DYSON

The Legacy of George Hale

IN THE YEAR 1897 a famous cartoon appeared in a newspaper in Chicago. Underneath it is the caption: "The Biggest in the World. A Contrast in Modern Civilization." The cartoon shows on the right an unflattering portrait of the old Queen of Prussia, standing proudly in front of the giant siege-gun Big Bertha, with a banner carrying the word "Destruction." On the left is a handsome young lady, representing America, standing in front of the new telescope that had been given to the University of Chicago by the millionaire Charles Yerkes. Around the tube of the telescope is wrapped a banner with the word "Instruction." The citizens of Chicago at that time were exceedingly proud of their rapidly growing university and equally proud of their giant telescope. Another newspaper reported the dedication ceremonies of the telescope with the headlines: "Yerkes Breaks into Society. Street-car Boss uses a Telescope as a Key to the Temple Door. And it Fits Perfectly."

So Charles Yerkes gave his money and had his rewards, an entrée to the intellectual elite of Chicago and his name attached to an observatory of world class. The Yerkes Observatory brought about a revolution in observational astronomy. It was the first observatory specifically designed for doing astrophysics—that is to say, it was not just a telescope in a dome, but it incorporated a well-equipped physical laboratory where starlight could be analyzed with sophisticated optical and spectroscopic devices. It was the first observatory built in the modern style, with optical shops, computing rooms, and laboratories taking up more space than telescopes. It was the first observatory in which a modern professional astronomer would feel at home.

The building of the Yerkes Observatory was not only an important event in the history of astronomy, it was also a typical example of a pattern that was to be repeated many times in the century that followed.

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The pattern is a juxtaposition of two apparently discordant themes. On the one hand, astronomy was a public entertainment, promoted by newspaper cartoonists and other representatives of the mass media, catering to the civic pride and superficial curiosity of a naive and ignorant citizenry. On the other hand, astronomy was a highly specialized and esoteric field of research, pursued by trained professionals and published in journals that only trained professionals can read. How does it happen that these two themes, the vulgar and the arcane, not only do not clash but even make sweet harmony together? When we look to the future and see every branch of astronomical science continuing to grow more specialized and more remote from its origins, how can we expect that public support for astronomy will be maintained? The two questions are not unrelated. If the future of astronomy is bright, it is precisely because there is here a natural community of interest between the professionals and the public. It was this community of interest, and not any unusual personal commitment of Charles Yerkes to astronomy, that made it appropriate for him to choose a telescope as his key to the temple door.

The brain that conceived and designed the Yerkes Observatory was not the brain of Charles Yerkes. The brain belonged to George Hale. In 1892, when the plan for the new observatory came into his head, Hale was twenty-four years old and a newly appointed associate professor of astrophysics at the University of Chicago. He wasted no time. Thirty years later Hale described how he went about the job of fund raising:

> I visited several men who might conceivably be willing to provide for the telescope. But no one had the money to spare. A few days later I made another fruitless round of visits in the city. At noon, somewhat discouraged, I called at the Corn Exchange Bank to see Mr. Charles Hutchinson. . . . After explaining my object, I asked for suggestions. "Why don't you try Mr. Yerkes?" he replied. "He has talked of the possibility of making some gift to the University, and might be attracted by this scheme." So I went at once to President Harper, then at the threshold of his tremendous task of building the University of Chicago. After a few questions, he heartily approved of the attempt, asked me to write out a statement of the plan, and sent it to Mr. Yerkes. A reply came back asking us to call on him. We did so, and before the interview was over, Mr. Yerkes asked us to telegraph the lens-maker Alvan Clark, with whom he made a contract for the forty-inch objective. I remember with pleasure Dr. Harper's enthusiasm as we left the office. "I'd like to go to the top of a hill and yell," he cried.

Hale now had Yerkes hooked but not yet landed. Hale needed not just a forty-inch lens but a forty-inch telescope mount and a dome and a stellar spectrograph and an observatory building three hundred feet long. Over the next three years, Charles Yerkes was persuaded to provide all these things, slowly and painfully, one at a time. It was five

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years before the observatory was finished, and Yerkes earned his reward of presiding over the dedication ceremonies. Meanwhile, George Hale had founded the *Astrophysical Journal*, the leading professional astronomical journal in the world, and had secured the mirror-blank for a sixty-inch reflecting telescope to put into his next observatory.

The next observatory happened to be at Mount Wilson in California, to which Hale moved in 1904. He installed his sixty-inch reflector there in 1908. This time the telescope and the buildings were paid for by Andrew Carnegie, who was subjected to the same treatment as Charles Yerkes and succumbed even more quickly. The citizens of Pasadena were as proud of their big new telescope as the citizens of Chicago had been of theirs. Andrew Carnegie made the mistake of coming in person to visit Mount Wilson two years after the sixty-inch reflector was installed. He spent a rainy night on the mountain with Hale and saw no stars, and as a result he found himself paying for the hundred-inch telescope that appeared alongside the sixty-inch telescope seven years later.

Hale afterward explained why he felt himself compelled to make such immodest demands on Mr. Carnegie's generosity: "I was thus bound to undertake the heavy task of raising funds or to forego the possibilities I seemed to see ahead. These were nothing less than an effective union of astronomy and physics, directed primarily toward the solution of the problem of stellar evolution, but with equal consideration of the advantages to be gained by fundamental physics from such a joint study." A fair and balanced verdict on Hale's career was pronounced long after his death by Hunter Dupree: "Hale was one of the first prototypes of the high-pressure, heavy-hardware, big-spending, team-organized scientific entrepreneurs. Would that all who followed him on this path had his technical competence, his clarity of scientific objective, and his breadth of view."

Hale's final adventure, the planning and building of the two-hundred-inch telescope on Mount Palomar, belongs to a more modern era. Instead of raising the funds from Mr. John D. Rockefeller personally, as he would have done in the old days, Hale had to deal with the administrative apparatus of the International Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. But the result was the same. Six million dollars flowed out of the Rockefeller coffers, and the telescope that bears Hale's name dominated observational astronomy for a quarter of a century.

George Hale spent a good part of his life organizing the private support of astronomy. Yet astronomy today is supported by governments, not by millionaires. The era of private endowment of major scientific enterprises is generally believed to be past. How then can George Hale and his millionaire friends be relevant to the problems of the funding of

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science in the 1980s? I believe that George Hale is relevant to our present-day problems because the private support of astronomy was never really private. In the transactions between Hale and his millionaire friends, the public was involved in essentially the same way as the public is involved in the negotiations between a present-day scientific entrepreneur and his congressional appropriations committee. Charles Yerkes was not buying the Yerkes Observatory for himself but for the citizens of Chicago. He felt himself to be an agent of the public, and he would not have acted as he did if he had not been confident of public approval. The inauguration of the observatory was reported by another Chicago newspaper under the headlines: "Feast of Wise Men. Yerkes gives a Banquet to Visitors and Citizens. Scientists Laud the University Telescope. Donor Says it is for All." A congressman inaugurating a national laboratory today would say exactly the same thing. "Donor says it is for all." Whether the donor is a millionaire, a private foundation established by a millionaire, or a committee of Congress, the gift is given because the donor believes it to be in the public interest. The task of the professional astronomer today is the same as the task that was performed so brilliantly by George Hale—namely, to persuade the donor that first-rate professional work in astronomy is what the public wants. If the astronomer succeeds in this task, he will be able to say, as George Hale said at the end of his life, "The truth is, of course, that I have been enjoying from boyhood the things I most liked to do, and why should one be praised for simply having a good time? If this has helped other men to enjoy themselves also, this has added to my pleasure."

II

Private and Public Funding of Astronomy

It is not quite true that the era of private endowment of astronomical observatories is past. It is true that the steady growth of major observatories during the last thirty years has been mainly funded by governments. The two big new American observatories at Kitt Peak and Cerro Tololo, the Anglo-Australian Observatory in Australia, the European Southern Observatory in Chile, and, biggest of all, the Soviet six-meter telescope at Zelenchukskaya—these were all paid for with public money. Simultaneously with this multiplication of optical telescopes, an equally impressive program of construction of radio telescopes, infrared telescopes, and X-ray telescopes has been going forward, likewise paid for by government funds. It is true that, as a general rule, as soon as public money moves into any area of human activity, private money is driven out. But in spite of the general rule, in the particular case of the

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support of astronomical research, private money has not been entirely driven out. Alongside the two great publicly supported observatories in Chile, one American and the other European, a third observatory has recently been completed at Las Campanas, built and staffed by the private resources of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. In addition to the new Las Campanas Observatory, the old observatories of the Hale era are still vigorously active and are still in private hands. In the quality of the equipment and in the professionalism of the work done, there is no noticeable difference between the publicly and privately funded observatories. Astronomers do not particularly care who signs their paychecks, provided that the paychecks continue to arrive regularly. But the fact that they still have a substantial source of funds independent of the government is important to them, for it insulates them to some extent from the rapidly fluctuating political constraints to which government funding agencies are subject.

It is not easy to keep alive the tradition of independent private funding in this era of big government and continual inflation. The Carnegie Institution is the chief sustainer of that tradition; it runs the Mount Wilson Observatory in California and the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile and pays the salaries of their staffs. But unfortunately it is not true anymore, as it was until recently, that the salaries are paid entirely from private funds. I quote now from the 1978 report of James Ebert, president of the Carnegie Institution:

> Our catalogue for 1978–1979 reads, "All salaries of Staff Members and supporting technical and administrative staff are met from Institution funds. Funds from other suitable sources are accepted or administered by the Institution usually for the provision of equipment or for fellowship grants supplementing the Institution's own fellowship fund." This statement of policy reflects a rich and treasured tradition of the Institution. That tradition must now be breached. This decision, which has been long in coming, was not reached without soul-searching by all of us. My principal concerns are shared by Trustees and Staff Members alike: that our increasing dependence upon external support will reduce the degree of flexibility with which our Staff Members pursue inquiries of their own choice; that our research will be skewed toward questions for which external funding is most readily available; that our autonomy will be reduced; and that our Staff Members' identification with the Institution will be weakened. . . . Unfortunately, knowing all these pitfalls does not mean that we know how to avoid them.

So that is James Ebert's capitulation speech. In plain English, his message is, "Sorry, boys, but we can't afford to go it alone anymore." From now on, the Carnegie Institution will trim its principles to fit its purse.

Does this capitulation mean that the tradition of private support of

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astronomy is finally dead? I do not think so. The tradition is breached, but it is still very much alive. The Carnegie Institution is still supporting astronomy on a large scale. If ever the government should either interfere unacceptably with scientific programs or abandon support of astronomical research altogether, the Carnegie Institution can always reassert its authority and keep its observatories running with its own resources. The future is unpredictable. Many people believe that we are on a one-way slide toward complete centralization and governmental control of all scientific activities. But it is at least possible that the tide will turn the other way, that future economic and political trends will favor decentralization and a revival of influence of private institutions.

Six years ago I went to the Caucasus Mountains to visit the new Soviet observatory at Zelenchukskaya. The observatory had been under construction for twenty years and was just beginning to go into operation. The six-meter telescope was finished and was sitting quietly in its gigantic dome, but unfortunately the slit of the dome was blocked by masses of ice and could not be opened. I gave a theoretical seminar to the assembled astronomers in a lecture room where the temperature was minus ten degrees centigrade. The situation did not look very good for anybody who wanted to do serious work in astronomy. But in spite of all that, I stayed three nights on the mountain and enjoyed my stay very much. The Russians were friendly, and the views all around the observatory were magnificent. And there was one feature of the observatory that I found sociologically fascinating. That was the visitors' gallery.

Those who have gone as tourists to visit the two-hundred-inch telescope on Mount Palomar will remember the visitors' gallery, a glass-enclosed area inside the dome where tourists can see the telescope but cannot pollute the air around it with the heat and humidity of their breathing. At Zelenchukskaya they have a visitors' gallery, like the one at Palomar, only about ten times as big. The dome is much bigger than the Palomar dome, and the visitors' gallery is bigger even than the Palomar gallery would be if it were scaled up in proportion to the dome. And behind the visitors' gallery at Zelenchukskaya they have a white wall for visiting dignitaries to sign their names on. Instead of a visitors' book they have a wall, and they invited me to write my name on the wall. The wall is huge, about a hundred feet long, and still I had a hard time finding a place on it large enough to write my name. Every square inch of the wall was tightly packed with names.

When I saw that wall, I understood for the first time what the Zelenchukskaya observatory was for. The government officials who decided to build the observatory in 1956 obviously did not care much about astronomy. They did not mind keeping the astronomers waiting for twenty years while the six-meter telescope was being built. Even

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when the telescope was finished, they were not in any hurry to get the dome unstuck so that the astronomers could get to work. For those government officials, the things that mattered were the visitors' gallery and the wall. The visitors' gallery and the wall must have been given some real priority, so that they were in full swing for many years before the telescope was ready. For years and years before my visit, busloads of schoolteachers and factory workers and party chairmen must have been trooping through the visitors' gallery, admiring this latest triumph of Soviet science, and writing their names on the wall.

One of the factors that the government officials who planned the observatory did not worry about was the Zelenchukskaya weather. I was on the mountain for three nights and did not see the sky. Even at Mount Palomar one may be unlucky and run into a string of cloudy nights. But at Zelenchukskaya the weather is consistently bad for the greater part of each year. The site is far too close to the high Caucasus peaks, which are regularly stirring up storms and clouds. One of the Soviet astronomers told me in confidence that the Zelenchukskaya project had set back the progress of optical astronomy in the Soviet Union by twenty years. The project absorbed for twenty years the major part of the funds assigned for telescope building. With the same money, the Soviet government might have built four or five first-rate modern observatories of modest size at optically excellent sites in central Asia, and a whole generation of astronomers might have been saved from frustration. But then the political officials in Moscow would not have had the satisfaction of building the biggest telescope in the world, and there would have been no hundred-foot wall for the visitors to write their names on.

Maybe it is unfair of me to point to the stupidities of Zelenchukskaya, with the implied suggestion that such stupidities are a normal consequence of governmental support of astronomy. But I could give other examples. In England, a committee of government officials decided for political reasons to place the Isaac Newton telescope, the pride of British optical technology, in a site at Herstmonceux, which is unique among major observatories in having weather even worse than Zelenchukskaya. After many years of struggling in vain with fog and rain, the English astronomers have now finally succeeded in persuading their government to move the telescope to a good site in the Canary Islands. Fortunately for the English astronomers, the Isaac Newton telescope is not the biggest in the world. It is actually small enough to be moved, and small enough to be a working instrument rather than a political showpiece. The danger is real that publicly supported projects become subordinated to considerations of political prestige that make them scientifically sterile. We are lucky that this has not yet happened to any of the publicly supported observatories of the United States. Perhaps the

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existence of excellent privately supported observatories in this country has helped to keep the management of the publicly supported facilities honest.

III

The Amateurs and the Professionals

One great advantage of astronomy in the competition for public funds is that it is not yet completely professionalized. In almost every country of the world, there is a large group of skilled and serious amateur astronomers forming a bridge between the professionals and the public. In 1979 three supernovas were discovered in external galaxies, two by professionals and one by an amateur. A group of amateurs in California, calling themselves the Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy, has built and equipped an observatory at which they do work of fully professional quality. Other groups of amateurs are less ambitious and only go out of doors occasionally for a brief look at the moon and the planets. But the existence of this widespread amateur activity gives the public a feeling of familiarity with the practice of astronomy. Astronomy is not a science like nuclear physics or biochemistry, remote and incomprehensible to ordinary mortals. Everybody has seen pictures of comets and galaxies. All of us can imagine ourselves sitting at the business end of a telescope and discovering a supernova, even if we are not quite sure what a supernova is. When a professional astronomer comes before a congressional committee to ask for funds, the committee does not need to be told what astronomy is all about. The committee members know at least approximately what the astronomer will be doing and why it may be exciting.

The great majority of professional astronomers are like professional physicists or professional chemists, typical products of a specialized academic training. They spend their young years at universities being stuffed full of specialized information and finally emerge with a Ph.D., which they hope will entitle them to practice their trade of teaching and research in astronomy for the rest of their lives. These typical Ph.D. astronomers are the backbone of the profession. They are wonderfully dedicated and capable people. They staff our observatories and universities and work night and day at the tough and demanding job of exploring the universe. They constantly push to extend the limits of sensitivity of their instruments, and they struggle to build coherent theoretical understanding out of faint signals hardly distinguishable from noise.

They are, in the best sense of the word, a priesthood, a group of

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people trained and dedicated to the pursuit of unworldly knowledge. They have the virtues and the defects of a priesthood. Their virtues are seriousness of purpose, intellectual integrity, and a practical willingness to help one another in spite of professional rivalries. Their defects are a certain exclusiveness, one might even say a certain arrogance, a deeply ingrained belief that the world owes them a living, and an inability to communicate on equal terms with people outside who do not belong to the fraternity. The inability to communicate easily is of course a grave weakness when astronomers come before congressional committees to ask for public support. I believe it is no accident that George Hale, the most successful astronomical fund raiser in history, did not have a Ph.D. He had no lack of professional competence. He personally invented the spectroheliograph and used it to take the first detailed pictures of the sun's atmosphere. He discovered the magnetic fields in sunspots. But he was too busy building observatories to have time for a Ph.D. A bachelor of science degree from M.I.T. was good enough for him. And this probably made it easier for him to talk to millionaires in a language they could understand.

Fortunately, there has always been room in the astronomical profession for a minority of unconventional spirits who do not fit into the normal academic mold. The two most famous examples of nonacademic astronomers in this century were Bernhard Schmidt and Milton Humason. Bernhard Schmidt invented the Schmidt telescope, which takes wide-angle pictures with high resolution. The Schmidt telescope made possible the photographic surveys of the entire sky that observers use all the time to locate interesting objects. It is hard to imagine how a modern observer could find his way around the sky if he did not have the sky-survey prints handy in a convenient drawer at the observatory.

Bernhard Schmidt grew up on a farm on a small island in the Gulf of Finland, then belonging to the Russian empire. At the age of eleven he began doing experiments with homemade gunpowder and blew off his right hand. After that, working with his left hand, using a cigar box and the bottom of a beer bottle that he had ground into a lens in a saucer of fine sand, he built a camera and actually took pictures with it. When he was grown he moved to the village of Mittweida in Germany and lived there for twenty-five years, supporting himself by making mirrors and lenses. At the age of twenty-six he made a sixteen-inch mirror that far surpassed in quality other existing mirrors at the time. That made him famous, and he was kept busy with orders from professional observatories. Finally, at the age of forty-seven, he accepted a semiprofessional position as a "voluntary colleague" at the Hamburg observatory. There he invented and built the first Schmidt telescope. The astronomer Walter Baade describes how he appeared to his colleagues in Hamburg:

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A highly unusual man, this Bernhard Schmidt. He always worked in the claw-hammer cutaway coat and striped trousers of formal attire. He rebelled at any regular working hours. Money meant nothing to him. He liked his schnapps, and chain-smoked good cigars. . . . His friends were few, for he was shy and retiring. He prized his independence above everything else.

By the summer of 1930 he had completed his first 14-inch Schmidt. He called me one sultry Sunday afternoon to say it was ready. From an attic window of the observatory he trained it on a cemetery. "Can you read the names on the tombstones?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "but I can see only one thing: the optics are absolutely marvelous."

Schmidt published only one paper in his life, at the age of fifty-two. It is three pages long.

While Schmidt was making his reputation as a lens grinder in Mittweida, Milton Humason was living by himself on Mount Wilson in California. Humason was fourteen years old and had dropped out of high school after finishing eighth grade because he liked living wild on Mount Wilson better than sitting in class. By great good luck, he was roaming around Mount Wilson when George Hale came by and decided to build his new observatory there. Humason did not meet Hale at that time. But when the construction of the observatory began and the mule trains began to wind their way up the trail to the top of the mountain, Humason took a job as a mule driver. He drove mules up and down the mountain for a couple of years and began talking to the people who were building the observatory. He began to be interested in what the observatory was for. So when the building was finished, he took a job as a janitor and moved inside. Soon after that, he married the daughter of the chief engineer and shortly thereafter began helping the astronomers develop their plates in the darkroom. A little later he began helping the astronomers expose their plates at the telescope. After a few years, he was taken on as a regular night assistant, and at the age of twenty-nine, he became a professional astronomer, a full member of the observatory staff. For the rest of his life he worked at the one-hundred- and two-hundred-inch telescopes, pushing ever further the art of measuring red shifts of remote galaxies and thereby uncovering the large-scale architecture of the universe.

I tell these stories of Schmidt and Humason not just to give a warm sentimental glow of nostalgia for the good old days when life was simpler than it is now. Schmidt and Humason were a part of modern astronomy. It was vitally important for the flourishing of astronomy in this century that people like Schmidt and Humason could be brought into the profession from the outside, without any academic credentials, and were even welcomed as colleagues by the people on the inside. The examples of Schmidt and Humason show that the astronomical fraternity

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is not after all a closed priesthood, jealously guarding its professional privileges. Or at least it was not so until recently.

What is the situation now? Would it be possible today for a mule driver with an eighth grade education to become a staff member at a major observatory? Would it be possible for a one-armed lens grinder to be invited there as an honored guest? I do not know. I hope the answer to these questions would be yes, but I am not sure. I think it is very important, if the astronomical community is to maintain in the future the good public relations that it has had in the past, that the doors of the temple of science be kept open to outsiders. If it is true that under present conditions a high school dropout like Humason or a self-taught optical genius like Schmidt has no hope of acceptance into the academic hierarchy, then the astronomical profession is likely to run into some very serious trouble. The public has a way of reacting strongly against any group of people that claims superior status and privileges for its members on the basis of paper qualifications. If astronomy has become a closed shop in which only people formally qualified with a Ph.D. are permitted to work, then science is hurt in two ways. Science is hurt immediately because some of the most creative and inventive spirits are kept out of it. And science is hurt in the long run because the public is intelligent enough to tell the difference between a challenging intellectual adventure and a welfare program for holders of the Ph.D.

Fortunately for the future of astronomy, the nature of the subject itself makes the atmosphere of a closed shop hard to sustain. New instruments and new objects of study are constantly emerging. Each new instrument and each new discovery bring new people with them into the astronomical profession. The old fraternity of optical astronomers is constantly rejuvenated by fresh influxes of radio astronomers, X-ray astronomers, planetary geologists, meteoritic chemists, and magneto-hydrodynamicists. And optical astronomy itself does not stand still, but brings in fresh crowds of electronic and computer experts to build the new optical detectors that are now replacing Humason's photographic plates.

One aspect of astronomy that does not change is a peculiar affinity between those who love to explore the sky and those who love to explore the natural beauty of the earth. I mentioned earlier the Monterey Institution for Research in Astronomy, a group of serious amateur astronomers who have proved that it is still possible to do work of professional quality with private funds. It seems altogether appropriate that one of the chief patrons and supporters of the Monterey Institution was Ansel Adams, the great photographer of our western mountains. And Ansel Adams was not the first nature lover to be favorably disposed toward astronomy. When George Hale welcomed Andrew Carnegie at

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the newly built Mount Wilson Observatory in 1910, he stood with Carnegie and a group of friends for an official photograph. There on the photograph, between Hale and Carnegie, stands the tall and dignified figure of John Muir.

IV

Entertainment, Instruction, and Monuments

In 1979 the late Philip Handler, then president of the National Academy of Sciences, put up a big statue of Einstein on the grounds of the Academy building in Washington. He thought it would be a good idea to bring Einstein, the most famous scientist and, with the possible exception of Charlie Chaplin, the most famous person in twentieth century America, to his rightful place on the tourist circuit, where he could be seen in the company of his peers Jefferson and Lincoln. Handler tackled this project as George Hale would have tackled it, moving swiftly and decisively to override any possible opposition. He commissioned the statue at a cost of $1.5 million from the sculptor Robert Berks, raised half of the money in a hurry from private donors, and borrowed the rest from a bank to cover the deficit. Immediately there arose a storm of protest from the academic community. Academy members and scientists protested because they had not been consulted about the design and the financing of the monument. Professional artists protested because the sculptor had not been selected in proper fashion by a jury of artists and connoisseurs. Intellectual snobs of all kinds protested because the statue is a vulgar realistic portrait rather than an abstract composition conforming to the prevalent fashions in academic art. Handler was shocked and amazed by the bitterness and intensity of the protests. But he went ahead boldly and put up the statue in time for the Einstein centennial in 1979. You can see it for yourselves whenever you go to Washington. If you are brave, you may even admit that you like it. I like it myself, although I do not dare to say so in Princeton.

Two years later I happened to meet Philip Handler in Washington, and I asked him whether he felt the statue had been worth all the abuse he had had to take from his academic colleagues. Would he do it again if he had the choice? Handler replied emphatically, yes. He first knew for sure that the statue was right when it came to graduation time in the spring of 1980. He watched out of his office window and saw group after group of kids, mostly black, come from the high schools of Washington in their caps and gowns on graduation day to have their graduation photographs taken in front of Einstein's statue. When Handler saw that, he knew the struggle had not been in vain. With this statue, the Academy

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has for the first time given the people of Washington something they can feel and touch, something they can be proud of, something they can in some sense possess.

I believe this story of the Einstein statue carries a lesson for any scientist or astronomer seeking public support for his work. The public has a soul. The public can usually tell the difference between real greatness and academic pretension. The public responded warmly to Einstein because it saw in him a truly great man without pretensions. The public supported George Hale for the same reason. The public does not expect much in return from the people it supports. It expects honest work, professional competence, and the opportunity to participate to the extent possible in the processes of scientific discovery. The telescope with the banner labeled "Instruction" symbolized in 1897 the desire of the public for participation. Under the conditions of modern scientific research, public participation must often be limited in scope or only symbolic in nature, but it is none the less important for that. Public participation may take the form of entertainment, instruction, or the enjoyment of public monuments. Entertainment these days means mainly television. No astronomer should underrate the value of the services done for astronomy by our colleagues Fred Hoyle and Carl Sagan, who happen to be gifted as television stars. Instruction means popular science magazines, lectures, and books. Those of us who are not television stars can still contribute to public participation in science by teaching and writing for as wide an audience as we can reach.

Last but not least, the public can participate in science by sharing our public monuments, riding the bus up the mountain and signing their names on the wall at Zelenchukskaya, taking the kids for a picnic and walking through the dome of the Hale telescope in the peace of a summer afternoon on Mount Palomar, driving up Mount Hamilton by moonlight for a visitors' night at the Lick Observatory and looking at the glory of Saturn's rings through the Crossley refractor, or standing tall and proud in cap and gown in front of Einstein's statue on a spring morning in Washington. Astronomers are lucky, because their places of work are also places of pilgrimage for members of the public who go to the mountains in search of natural beauty. The heavens, too, are full of beauty unfolding before us as our knowledge increases. So long as astronomers take the trouble to share with the public as much as possible of the grandeur and the beauty of their discoveries, the public will see to it that their work will continue.

Edwin Hubble was the astronomer who came after George Hale, using the telescopes that Hale had built and discovering with their help the law of expansion of the universe. Hubble also followed the good example of George Hale in explaining to the public in simple words the

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substance of his discoveries. "For I can end as I began," Hubble wrote. "From our home on the Earth, we look out into the distances and strive to imagine the sort of world into which we are born. Today we have reached far out into space. Our immediate neighborhood we know rather intimately. But with increasing distance our knowledge fades, and fades rapidly, until at the last dim horizon we search among ghostly errors of observation for landmarks that are scarcely more substantial. The search will continue. The urge is older than history. It is not satisfied and it will not be suppressed."

Flight of Cranes on a Mountainous Landscape

MEG SCHOERKE

—a Chinese painting, seventeenth century

Rustling, the curious cranes
(white bodied, red spots on white
heads, black necks and tail feathers)
pry about the hummock with
long beaks. Croaking, a few preen
in trees. One hovers, floats, lands.
Long, spindly black legs stick out
at angles as the snakelike
necks weave. Peering out, clacking
their beaks, they poke underneath
the pointed grass. Suddenly,
they hear a noise, screech, mass, rise
and flap off into my room.

MEG SCHOERKE recently graduated from Northwestern University.

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The Continuing Crisis

Fashions in Education

DIANE RAVITCH

IN THE SPRING OF 1983, unsuspecting American citizens woke up one morning to discover in the morning's headlines that we were "a nation at risk"; that other countries were challenging our leadership in "commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation"; and that "a rising tide of mediocrity" was threatening "our very future as a Nation and a people." The National Commission on Excellence in Education warned, in the kind of flashy prose that commands media attention, that "if an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. . . . We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament."

This was strong stuff, but it was only the first in a series of critical reports on the quality of American schooling. Within weeks, several other state-of-education study groups weighed in with dire pronouncements about the need for change, and the fall season opened with a new crop of critical books and studies about the schools. The daily papers and weekly newsmagazines responded to the new issue by expanding their coverage of education, but the only fact of which the media seemed certain was that the schools were in a "crisis." Customarily uninterested in long-term educational trends, the news media offered no explanation for the plethora of critiques: as first one and then another study appeared, each was duly reported, but without reference to any context to explain the tidal wave. Why did so many reports appear simultaneously? What did it mean? No one hazarded a guess.

Since the National Commission on Excellence in Education was appointed by a conservative Republican president, there was a tendency in some quarters to treat its report as a statement of Reaganism. However, this was a superficial and perhaps defensive reaction, for the commission itself did not have a partisan cast. Nor could the conclusions of the other studies and reports be dismissed out of hand as machinations

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of an administration intent on dismantling the federal role in education and reviving school prayer. (Indeed, one of the best of the recent studies was *High School*, written by Ernest Boyer, the last commissioner of education in the Carter administration.) Political partisanship was not a factor in any of the reports. The president had been saying that the involvement of the federal government had caused the decay of the schools, but none of the reports (including that of his own commission) supported that argument. Another federally funded commission, the National Science Board's Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology, recommended additional federal spending of about $1 billion a year to improve instruction in these areas, even though the president clearly opposed increased federal funding of education.

If there was a single event that precipitated the present enthusiasm for educational reform, it was probably the announcement in 1975 by the College Board that scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test had fallen steadily since 1963. This college-entry test of verbal and mathematical skills has been in use since the late 1920s, though only since the late 1950s has it been taken by large numbers of high school students. The substantial decline of the national average, especially on the verbal portion of the test, meant different things to different people. For most people, the falling SAT scores suggested that something was seriously wrong with the schools, and that the freewheeling educational experimentation of the 1960s and 1970s had undermined the teaching of basic skills. The nascent back-to-basics movement gathered momentum, and during the late 1970s nearly forty states passed minimum competency tests for high school students, to assess whether they had mastered the basics. Since minimum competency tests guaranteed only that those at the bottom had attained minimal literacy, the spread of such tests did not allay doubts about the quality of precollegiate education.

Not everyone saw the SAT score decline as a catastrophe. There were those who said that the falling scores meant nothing at all because the drop in the mean was caused by the increased numbers of poor, black, and female students taking the tests. And then there were those like Ralph Nader and his associates who said that the test itself meant nothing at all, so it scarcely mattered whether national scores went up or down.

In search of reasons for the score decline, the College Board created a blue-ribbon panel, headed by former secretary of labor Willard Wirtz. The panel's report was issued in 1977 and concluded that a substantial increase in the proportion of low-scoring test takers had accounted for most of the score decline until 1970. After 1970 the demographic composition of the test takers remained relatively constant, yet test

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scores continued to fall (the national verbal mean went from 478 in 1963 to 460 in 1970, then dropped even faster to 429 in 1977). The perception that a real erosion of verbal skills had occurred was reinforced by the fact that the number and proportion of students scoring over 700 dropped by 50 percent between 1967 and 1974.

The Wirtz panel held that the score decline "warrants serious attention," but it was notably coy in casting stones at perpetrators. The grand villain was "pervasive change," the rise of great impersonal social forces like television, Vietnam, Watergate, and family dissolution. How these were related to falling scores other than as "distractions" was unclear. What was clear, however, was that much had changed within the school during this critical period. The panel noted, first, an expansion of electives, accompanied by a decline in enrollments in basic academic courses. For example, the number of Massachusetts schools offering courses in filmmaking and mass media had grown, while the number offering junior-year courses in English and world history had declined. Second, standards within the schools had clearly fallen: "Absenteeism formerly considered intolerable is now condoned. An 'A' or 'B' means a good deal less than it used to. Promotion from one grade to another has become almost automatic. Homework has apparently been cut about in half." Third, one of the panel's internal studies concluded that eleventh-grade textbooks were currently written at a ninth-to-tenth-grade reading level, that the portion of the typical text devoted to pictures and graphics had expanded, and that textbook assignments generally asked "only for underlining, circling and filling in of single words." Lastly, the panel concluded that "the critical factors in the relationship between curricular change and the SAT scores are (1) that less thoughtful and critical reading is now being demanded and done, and (2) that careful writing has apparently about gone out of style." The principle of Occam's razor surely should have indicated that such in-school practices were sufficient to explain declining verbal skills of the college bound, even without the social and political calamities beyond the classroom door.

As the Wirtz panel was composing its findings, citizens' groups across the country were vocally criticizing low standards, lax discipline, and social promotion. Legislatures responded to these pressures by ordering tests of students and teachers. Educators and policymakers responded by creating committees. By 1981, when President Reagan appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education, at least two dozen committees, study groups, and task forces were already considering the condition of the schools, and most of these were specifically studying the high school. There seemed to be a general recognition that the course of study in the elementary years was essentially the same for all students,

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but that something was amiss in the later years (the junior high years—certainly no less important than the years that preceded or followed them—were conspicuously ignored).

As the reports began to pile up, so did the evidence of poor educational performance. The National Commission on Excellence in Education offered a broad list of particulars:

"About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate"—a figure that was dwarfed by the estimate that "functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent."

"Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched."

From 1963 to 1980, SAT scores fell by more than fifty points on the verbal section and nearly forty points on the mathematics section.

"There was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973, and 1977."

"Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions."

"Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education . . . in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation."

American high schools are usually divided into academic, vocational, and general tracks, and "the proportion of students taking a general program of study has increased from 12 percent in 1964 to 42 percent in 1979."

What did the "general track" consist of? "Twenty-five percent of the credits earned by general track high school students are in physical and health education, work experience outside the school, remedial English and mathematics, and personal service and development courses, such as training for adulthood and marriage."

Enrollments in traditional academic courses were not reassuring: "We offer intermediate algebra, but only 31 percent of our recent high school graduates complete it; we offer French I, but only 13 percent complete it. . . . Calculus is available in schools enrolling about 60 percent of all students, but only 6 percent of all students complete it."

Students were found to be doing less homework (two-thirds of high school seniors reported less than one hour per night), and "grades have risen as average student achievement has been declining."

"A 1980 State-by-State survey of high school diploma requirements reveals that only eight States require high schools to offer foreign

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language instruction. Thirty-five states require only 1 year of mathematics, and 36 require only 1 year of science for a diploma."

In response to this curricular vacuity, the national commission urged that state and local graduation requirements be strengthened to include: four years of English, three years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, and one-half year of computer science; in addition, it proposed that college-bound students study two years of a foreign language. The National Center for Education Statistics, the data-gathering branch of the United States Department of Education, examined transcripts for the high school graduating class of 1982 and concluded that only 2.6 percent actually met the commission's proposed graduation requirements (not including foreign language). Even among those planning to go to a four-year college, only 22.6 percent had taken as much English, mathematics, science, and social studies as the commission recommended.

In the fall of 1983, the National Science Board observed that "students in our Nation's schools are learning less mathematics, science and technology, particularly in the areas of abstract thinking and problem solving. Since the late 1960s, most students have taken fewer mathematics and science courses. Mathematics and science achievement scores of 17-year-olds have dropped steadily and dramatically during the same period." The science board's panel recommended at least sixty minutes per day of mathematics and thirty minutes per day of science in the elementary grades, and a full year of math and science in both seventh and eighth grades. In high school, it called for a requirement of at least three years of mathematics and three years of science and technology for all students.

In California, a group of business executives calling themselves the California Roundtable was several months ahead of the national commission. In the fall of 1982, the roundtable laid out a case for reforming the state's schools. It pointed out that the school day and the school year had grown shorter, and that academic demands had been reduced. High school seniors received academic credit for work experience unrelated to their studies, and less than one-fifth of them reported completing a single homework assignment per week. As school work diminished, remedial work in the state's colleges expanded: "Over half of the students entering the state university and college systems take remedial courses in English, and about half also take remedial math courses, despite having received good grades in the required high school courses in these subjects." The roundtable's study also identified a disturbing decline in academic course enrollments, linked with a marked increase in nonacademic electives. The roundtable recommended the phasing in

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of higher state graduation requirements: four years of English, three years of mathematics, two years of science, one year of computer studies, three years of social studies, one year of American government, two years of American history, two years of foreign language, and two years of physical education.

In the states, the national commission's report generated a flurry of activity, and new commissions were created by legislatures, state education departments, school boards, interest groups, and governors. Some of this interest predated the commission's report, since the problems that concerned the national commission were also apparent at the local level. By the fall of 1983, many states were considering educational reform, centered largely on such matters as the status and compensation of teachers and on high school graduation requirements. These two reforms are inextricably intertwined, since it will be pointless to raise curricular requirements unless there is an adequate number of skilled teachers available. A number of states have increased their graduation requirements, especially in such subjects as mathematics, science, and foreign languages, but these are areas where there have been severe teacher shortages.

Most of the national commissions and task forces have recommended a basic required curriculum for all students—on grounds that the schools must educate everyone and that a democratic society needs a citizenry in which cultural and scientific literacy is highly developed. The goal of cultural and scientific literacy need not imply a monolithic curriculum, but it does imply a minimum foundation of required studies in the centrally important academic disciplines. Common requirements, however, have long been opposed by a substantial segment of the education profession, which harbors a deeply ingrained hostility toward such words as "standards," "subject matter," and even "excellence" (which is perceived as a code word for academic elitism). Excellence, it turns out, is a threatening concept when it is defined in relation to a required curriculum.

It is instructive to note, for example, the reaction in New York State when the state board of regents proposed new graduation requirements: three years of math, science, and a foreign language, and four years of English and social studies. This proposal, though it was in line with the recommendations of the various national study groups, was soon under attack. Teachers of home economics, vocational education, and others denounced the new requirements for their narrowness (meaning that their own specialties were not among the required subjects); the chancellor of the New York City schools insisted that students in vocational programs and in art and music courses would be unduly burdened by the raising of requirements in science and mathematics;

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others, claiming to speak for minority youth, charged that the dropout rate would rise along with the new standards.

No one should be surprised by the degree of dissension within the education profession, for it has been virtually a canonical principle of modern pedagogy that not all children can "take" an academic curriculum, which is of value only to the college-bound student. For more than sixty years, the curriculum field has been dominated by a species of social efficiency or functionalism that judges curricular offerings by their utility and that insists on a close fit between what students study and what roles they are likely to assume as adults. Added to this orientation is a set of complementary beliefs such as: the curriculum must be constructed to meet the needs of society and of children; since children differ, the curriculum must vary according to the needs of the children; since society is constantly changing, the curriculum must constantly change to meet society's needs. In theory, any one of these precepts is defensible; children do differ, society does change, and the curriculum of the school must take into account the dynamic quality of the world around it as well as the specific abilities and needs of students. But in practice, these otherwise unassailable precepts have provided justification for educational practices that range from the unwise to the bizarre. Under their banner have marched the advocates of relevance, arguing the case for trendiness in the curriculum, and the advocates of vocational tracking, dividing children into educationally separate tracks in accordance with their presumed fitness for certain educational experiences.

Aside from the pedagogical principles that reside in many textbooks as a ready rationale for a plunge into vocationalism or politicization, Americans have a problem—or, as we would say today, a hang-up—about authority. Education, usually, is by its nature an exercise in authority, since it implies that students are gathered to learn from teachers. The activity of teaching necessarily involves a belief in authority, since the teacher presumably seeks to impart something that the student does not know or cannot do. But many Americans have wished to find ways to avoid this inescapable relationship, and periodically the sentiment is expressed that teachers must learn from their students, that experience is corrupting, that innocence (ignorance) is bliss. Without looking abroad to Rousseau, pedagogues can cite Emerson's opposition to educational uniformity: "I suffer whenever I see that common sight of a parent or senior imposing his opinion and way of thinking and being on a young soul to which they are totally unfit. Cannot we let people be themselves, and enjoy life in their own way?" It was this same spirit of educational laissez-faire that attracted so much admiration to A. S. Neill's Summerhill, where students learned what they wanted, when they wanted, but only if they wanted. Neill's model attracted much attention during

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the heyday of educational romanticism, appealing to those who longed for the naturalistic style of education on demand. Summerhill went too far for public school educators, since it was not a usable model in communities that prized a semblance of order and such conventional measures of achievement as reading scores. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, though, a variety of less-extreme experiments, like open education, struck a responsive chord by their claim that children learned best in the absence of authority, that their own choices were always better than anything imposed on them by coercion.

Policies were implied in the distaste for authority: the elimination or weakening of requirements for admission to and graduation from college, of requirements for graduation from high school, and of promotional standards from grade to grade. When colleges ceased requiring certain subjects for admission, many high schools could not find a good reason to maintain their requirements for graduation. Nor did it seem right to require all students to study science or mathematics, because some students didn't like those subjects. By the same token, other students didn't see why they should learn to write essays or study history. For those who planned to go to work instead of to college, there were always courses in vocational education or personal service courses, such as training for marriage and adulthood. Pushed by a philosophy of consumerism, the high school curriculum burgeoned with new electives, enrollment in mathematics and science courses diminished, homework and expository writing faded away. The guiding principle, it seemed, was to give students what they wanted; in this way, they would stay in school longer, have higher motivation to learn, and cause less trouble while there, while adults could compliment themselves for having met the needs of their students without using coercion.

It should have been a successful formula, but it was not. Once the principles of utility, relevance, and free choice became the touchstones of the curriculum, the consequences described by the Wirtz panel and the National Commission on Excellence in Education followed. When students were left on their own to decide whether to learn science, mathematics, and foreign language, it could hardly be surprising that enrollments dropped or that the supply of future teachers in these areas diminished accordingly. When student preferences determined course offerings, the explosion of electives became inevitable, particularly in history and English, where teachers were encouraged to split their courses into increasingly specialized and exotic minicourses to catch the mood of the market. Not even science was immune to the rush to electives. Paul DeHart Hurd of Stanford University, who prepared a paper on science education for the national commission on excellence, showed that more than one hundred new science courses were added to

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the junior and senior high school curriculum during the late 1960s and 1970s, including such offerings as astronomy, meteorology, oceanography, metric measurement, sex education, and human genetics.

Probably the single most significant result of these trends was the fractionation of the curriculum—not only in content but in student enrollment in courses of vastly different quality. Responding to the new freedom from requirements, students tracked themselves into academic, vocational, and general programs. In high school, subjects like foreign language, mathematics, and science—once required of all students, regardless of their ability—became options. To liken the patterns that developed to a cafeteria—as so many critics have done—is not entirely correct; better to say that there were three different cafeterias, one for the academic track students (about 35 percent of high school students), another for the vocational track (about 25 percent), and the third for the general track (about 40 percent). The three cafeterias, where students could help themselves to the courses they wanted, differed in several ways: by the extent of academic content; by the degree of challenge; and by the intrinsic, long-range value of the offerings. Given the fairly substantial differences among the three cafeterias, it was not surprising that the wide divergence in skills and knowledge between students at the top and those at the bottom was exacerbated by the triple-track curriculum, or that high school graduates could no longer be said to share a common body of knowledge, not to mention a common culture.

The arrangement had certain virtues. For one thing, educators felt satisfied that they were meeting the needs of different children by providing them with specialized offerings; at the same time, they were meeting society's needs by keeping adolescents in school instead of on the street or in the job market where they were not wanted. They often proclaimed as an article of faith that the diversification of the high school curriculum had lowered the dropout rate. It was true that the dropout rate had dropped steadily over the past forty years, but, oddly, it had remained steady at about 25 percent since the mid-1960s. In other words, the dilution and diffusion of the high school curriculum during the past fifteen years did not—contrary to the conventional wisdom—lower the dropout rate. Over the decades, the rise in the proportion of young people who finished high school has apparently been owing to economic and demographic factors, not to changes in the curriculum. Thus, the charge that an increase in requirements and in the assignment of essay writing and homework will cause more students to drop out may or may not be true, but it is not based on evidence.

The current debate has roots that extend over the past century. In the late nineteenth century, educators worried about the seeming disorganization of the high school curriculum and wondered whether there

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should be differentiation between students bound for college and those bound for work. A prestigious commission was appointed, which included five college presidents (its chairman was President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard). Known as the Committee of Ten, the group, in its report of 1893, proposed that all students be liberally educated, regardless of whether they were college bound or not, and that all should study English, history, foreign language, science, and mathematics. Recognizing that only a small minority of high school graduates went on to college, the committee asserted that "the secondary schools of the United States, taken as a whole, do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges." Some students might study longer than others in a given subject field, but the committee believed that a common liberal education was the best preparation for the duties of life, whatever the pupils' later destination.

For a time the views of the Committee of Ten were influential in the high schools, but its academic orientation was at odds with the mainstream of the new education profession. As enrollment in the high schools grew, professional educators felt constrained by the weight of academic traditionalism. John Dewey gained a substantial following for the view that the curriculum should be built around the interests of the child and should be better related to the community and to so-called real-life activities. There was a growing sense among education policymakers that the schools would never be able to play a constructive role as a social agency until they broke free of the limitations imposed by traditional academic goals. In 1918, a new group, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, issued a statement called the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. Unlike the Committee of Ten, the 1918 commission was composed largely of high school principals, professors of education, and educational bureaucrats. Its credo was that "secondary education should be determined by the needs of the society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available." On each of these grounds, the commission argued for a fundamental shift in the means and ends of a high school education. The main objectives of education, the commission concluded, were "1. Health. 2. Command of fundamental processes. 3. Worthy home-membership. 4. Vocation. 5. Citizenship. 6. Worthy use of leisure. 7. Ethical character." The only reference to the academic function of the school was "command of fundamental processes."

The cardinal principles statement facilitated the redefinition of the high school curriculum along functional lines and conferred respectability on vocational, technical, socio-personal, and other sorts of new courses—at first in addition to, and later instead of, the academic

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subjects. The notion that the student should be fitted to the curriculum and vice versa legitimated what we now call tracking. The academic curriculum, no longer considered appropriate for all students, became a special program for those who intended to go to college. Others, who were heading for the workplace, were directed to more practical pursuits better fitted to their later destination. The controlling principles in this readjustment were social utility and efficiency. Every subject was judged by whether it was immediately useful and whether it met the needs of the students. By that test, students who were not going to college had no use and no need for foreign language, or for anything more than a smattering of history, science, literature, and mathematics.

In the nearly seventy years since the publication of the cardinal principles, the debate has continued in a seesaw fashion. The utilitarians dominated the field in the 1940s, then the argument tilted to the champions of liberal education in the period just before and after *Sputnik*. During the past fifteen years, the cardinal principles have again held sway, as schools have tried to adjust the curriculum in order to reflect the changing moods of society and of students. The challenge that has never been met, whichever side was in the ascendancy, was to democratize the academic curriculum—both what was taught and who was taught—without cheapening it or without excluding large numbers of students from its reach.

What the various task forces and national commissions are now saying is that our educational systems must take on the job of making all young people literate, and their definition includes both cultural and scientific literacy. No one knows whether it can be done, because we have never tried to do it on a mass scale. If we make the attempt, it should be done with full knowledge of where we have gone astray in the past. At one extreme, the perfervid traditionalists have been content to educate those at the top without regard to the welfare of the majority of students; at the other, the perfervid progressives have cooperated in dividing and diluting the curriculum, which left the majority with an inadequate education. Most schools and teachers are not at the extremes, but they have little ability to blunt the lure of either progressivism or traditionalism, particularly to an indiscriminate media and to hyperactive policymakers. Pedagogical practice follows educational philosophy, and it is obvious that we do not yet have a philosophical commitment to education that is sound enough and strong enough to withstand the erratic dictates of fashion.

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The Acid Test

Advice to My Son

JOSEPH MEREDITH

If she touches you when she talks,
laying her hand lightly on your forearm,
do not assume she is the one.
For some women, this touching is learned.
It is no more than tactile punctuation—
delightful in itself, so feel free to enjoy it—
but not the sign you crave.
For others it is much worse.
They think of it as interpersonal contact,
designed to add positive reinforcement.
Be wary. It means she wants something
you would not otherwise give.
Appraise the curve of her fingers on your arm;
some raptors wear exquisite plumage.
But if she leans into you when she laughs,
her shoulder touching your shoulder,
this is natural—a birch leaning toward the sun—
the free expression of her heart.
Slip your arm around her waist.

If you hear in her voice,
dark and warm as mulled wine,
viole da gamba play, and the region
from your belt to your knees
begins to deliquesce,
there may be strings attached.
Or if she says only things that please you,

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you must conclude that she is greasing the skids.
She is not the one you seek.
Remember, in talk as in music, some friction
is both necessary and desirable.
Strings do not sound so sweet
without the scraping bow.
And cloves are ground to powder
to mull the wine (I leave to you
the role of the hot poker).

In restaurants, you may think you see
sparks of longing in her eyes.
I caution you, move the candle
before the wine arrives.
Between, the flame obscures,
but to the right or left, it gives easy access
to the kind of look that tells—
and darkens the dramatic dent
at the neckline of her dress.
And when you gaze deep into her eyes,
do not seek to see the movement of her soul.
It cannot be done.

When you look into a lake
you see no fish beneath the surface.
What you mostly see is your own face,
distorted, gazing back.
So with her eyes—and there diminished, too.
Treasure more the oddities you find:
the tiny flecks of gold and opalescent green
that make the sad gray iris dance.
In other words, should she "speak volumes"

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with her eyes, do not think she is the one
before you find who owns the copyright
or check the date of publication.

The sure signs you seek are phantoms—
embers in the ash that seem to move.
You might, though, try this:
Imagine a dim room
down the long hallway of the future
(It helps to have candles here, too).
The shades are drawn. You are in the bed
and around the foot stand
several solemn young people looking
vaguely like the face you shave each day.
She prays in a chair beside you,
her fingers touching your forearm.
They are gnarled and pale as roots—
a hag's fingers.
What hair she has is white and brittle.
Her eyes have all but disappeared
into the flesh of her face.
Her voice grates on your ears
like a child's violin.
Now, if you find her
absolutely essential to the scene,
if the thought of her not being there
feels empty in your stomach
and full in your throat,
then, perhaps, she is the one.

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The Existential Anxieties of Engineering

THEODORE ZIOLKOWSKI

MANY PEOPLE READING THE TITLE of this essay will recognize the allusion to the engineer Samuel Florman's paean to his profession entitled *The Existential Pleasures of Engineering* (1976). Florman's informative essay begins with a nostalgic survey of the golden age of engineering from 1850 to 1950, when seemingly every year, month, and week brought forth new marvels of technology and engineers felt a wellnigh religious exaltation from their perceived "mission of subduing the earth for the benefit of man and for the greater glory of God." That early flush of fulfillment gave way to worries, doubts, and self-criticism when mankind was suddenly confronted with the threat of nuclear extinction made possible by an increasingly sophisticated technology, not to mention the waste of our natural resources, the pollution of our environment, and even the hazards of such proud symbols as the automobile.

Florman points out that the engineers are hardly to be blamed for research and development undertaken at the behest of a society eager to enjoy the benefits of a consumer-oriented technology, and he goes on to refute the often-naive arguments of modern cultural pessimists who, forgetting that the words for "engineer" and "nature" are etymologically related, oppose a demonized technological wasteland to a never-never land of purity and innocence located in a utopian past that never existed. Florman concludes with a moving affirmation of what he calls the existential pleasures of engineering, generated by the intellectual excitement of technological discovery coupled with the ethical satisfactions of social service. Citing passages from Homer and the Old Testament as evidence for the joy found in technical accomplishment in antiquity, he urges his fellow engineers once again to take from their profession not only the pride in achievement but also the emotional gratifications that it affords.

One of the problems stems from a simple failure in public relations. Engineering as a profession, Florman notes, lacks poets within its ranks.

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"The engineer may merely be waiting for his Shakespeare." Up to a point the literary critic can agree with the apologist of engineering. Social philosophers from Marx to Marcuse have analyzed the impact of technology on modern man, but their thinking takes place at a level of sociological abstraction that rarely descends to the individual in substance or ascends to the poetic in form. Literature of the past hundred years is humming with poems about machines. In most of these cases, however—as in Whitman's *Passage to India*—the poets focus on the product, "the strong light works of engineers," not on the technologist who produces it. Even in the United States, often denounced by anti-technologists as the archetypal home of the engineer, writers have been so much obsessed with the tension between technology and the pastoral ideal, as Leo Marx argued in *The Machine in the Garden,* that they have given little attention to the engineer himself. And when that attention has in fact been given, as it was in a number of eminently forgettable German, Russian, and American novels from the early decades of the twentieth century, it has contributed little to the understanding of engineering as a profession. Yet it is possible to cite a group of modern works that do not figure in the bibliographies of vocations in literature—works that dignify the engineer, not by glorifying him uncritically, but by analyzing him seriously and presenting him as exemplary for modern man in all the ambivalence of his condition.

We hardly need to wait for modern times to find examples of the engineer viewed critically. All the unsavory motives attributed to the engineer by a suspicious society are evident in the career of the earliest aerospace technologist, Daedalus. Professional jealousy prompts Daedalus to murder his apprentice, whom he hurls to his death from the roof of Athena's temple on the Acropolis. The unscrupulous engineer hires himself out as a consultant for immoral ends when he devises a machine that enables Pasiphaë to couple with Poseidon's white bull and conceive the Minotaur. He is entrapped by the power he serves when he designs for King Minos that mythological Pentagon, the Labyrinth, only to be imprisoned in its dark corridors. The anguish of the engineer who overreaches himself is revealed when Daedalus fashions wings with which he and his son escape from the Labyrinth. Icarus, it will be recalled, flies too close to the sun; the wax holding his feathers together melts; and he perishes by falling into that part of the Aegean Sea that still bears his name. It is hardly an accident that many modern poets—from W. H. Auden and William Carlos Williams to Gottfried Benn and Albert Verwey—have written about Icarus (and, more specifically, about Brueghel's painting "The Fall of Icarus"), in whom they have perceived the archetype of modern man in a technological world that he fails to comprehend and that reacts with sublime indifference to his fate.

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In general, however, the literary appropriation of the engineer as representative man had to wait until the engineer emerged as a recognizable type. Engineering as an activity has taken place since the beginning of human history. Most of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World—from the pyramids of Egypt and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and the great lighthouse of Alexandria—constituted feats of engineering. But engineering as a profession hardly existed. Few engineers from the ancient world are known to us by name, and those few were engineers only in a secondary capacity. Imhotep, the builder of the great step pyramid of Saqqara and probably the first engineer that history knows by name, was renowned primarily as a medical man; after his death he was elevated to the status of god of physicians. Archimedes, the most celebrated engineer of Greek antiquity, regarded himself as a mathematician and set little store by the practical inventions for which he is remembered. (The antagonism between pure and applied science goes back at least as far as Plato.) Claudius Appius, who built the great highway named for him, was a Roman statesman. Vitruvius, who served as Augustus Caesar's military engineer, is remembered principally as the author of a classic work on architecture. And according to a derivation still imperfectly understood by scholars, the chief representative in religious matters for the ancient kings of Rome was known as "the supreme bridge builder," or *pontifex maximus*.

The marvels of engineering that the Middle Ages accomplished in its castles and cathedrals were planned and executed by artisans who emerged from the various trades and crafts, not from a central profession of engineering. The situation prevailed as late as the sixteenth century. Agricola, who composed the standard text on mining engineering, was a physician and gained his expertise by thinking about the health and safety of his patients from the mines of Upper Saxony. The world's first suspension bridge was built by Palladio, whose name is associated chiefly with an architectural style.

Engineering as a discipline whose principles could be codified and systematically transmitted is a product of the eighteenth century. In 1716 the Corps des ponts et chaussées was formed in response to the needs of the rapidly expanding French state for reliable communications and transportation, and the training of that body was formalized in 1747 by the establishment of the École nationale des ponts et chaussées, the world's first engineering school. With the creation of the École polytechnique in 1794, in which the practice of all engineering—not just the construction of roads and bridges—was based on scientific principles, France established the model for the polytechnical schools that arose rapidly in Austria, Prussia, England, and the United States.

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The word "engineer" originally specified exclusively a military engineer. Derived from the vocable *ingenium* ("a clever invention"), which Tertullian appropriated as the term for a battering ram and which gradually came to designate any kind of military engine, the various words *ingeniator, ingeniarius,* and *ingegnerus* all identified builders of military machines. The most famous "enginer" in Shakespeare is no doubt that clumsy fellow who manages to blow himself up—that is, to be "hoist with his own petar." The École polytechnique was still largely military, conceived to meet the technological needs of the revolutionary wars.

Non-military engineering, meanwhile, was undergoing a different sort of development across the channel. The first person to call himself a civil engineer in contrast to those engineers whose function was essentially military was reportedly John Smeaton. A mechanic and instrument maker by trade, Smeaton was dismayed by the situation prevailing in mideighteenth century England—that is, that England, having no engineers of her own, found it necessary to import them from abroad for all major projects. As late as the 1730s a Swiss engineer was commissioned to build Westminster Bridge because there was no one in England qualified to undertake so large a project. Smeaton traveled to Holland to study canals, windmills, land drainage, and harbor construction. Returning home, he executed his first major commission in 1755, the Eddystone Lighthouse near Plymouth, for which he invented, after systematic experimentation, the first fully successful hydraulic cement since Roman times.

Inspired by Smeaton's example, a Society of Civil Engineers was formed in London in 1771; by 1818 it had developed into a formally constituted Institution of Civil Engineering. In a famous formulation drafted for its charter of 1828, Thomas Tredgold defined engineering as "the art of directing the great sources of power in nature for the use and convenience of man." Two years later in the second chapter of his *Cours de philosophie positive,* Auguste Comte recognized the philosophical logic of engineering when he observed that "between scientists in the strict sense of the word and the actual managers of production there is beginning to emerge in our days an intermediate class, that of the engineers, whose particular function it is to organize the connections between theory and practice." By 1830 engineering had schools, professional associations, an ethical creed, and philosophical legitimation. It was moving rapidly toward its golden age.

It seems not only fitting but even inevitable that the first major literary appropriation of engineering should have occurred almost immediately after Tredgold formulated his classic definition and Comte confirmed the existence of the profession—in the last act of *Faust,* which

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Goethe wrote in 1831. Only to someone unacquainted with Goethe's biography is it surprising that he chose to let the hero of his masterpiece spend the last years of his life as an engineer. Goethe had been curious about problems of engineering since his youth. When as a young man he was appointed to be a Privy Councillor in the tiny duchy of Saxe-Weimar, one of his chief administrative responsibilities was to oversee engineering operations: specifically, the improvement of roads and the reopening of the silver mines at Ilmenau. Although Goethe had no training as an engineer, he devoted himself with considerable energy and intelligence to the practical aspects of his job. His interest in engineering, evident in his autobiographical writing and travel accounts, lasted throughout his lifetime. During the 1820s, when the public debate concerning the construction of great canals—Panama, Suez, Rhine-Danube—became lively, Goethe followed the discussions with eager attention.

If we keep this fascination in mind and remember that the 1820s—especially in England and France—mark an early high point in the public awareness of the exciting new profession that combined science with public service, it is not at all inconsistent that Goethe should let Faust devote his last years to an ambitious engineering project. When we encounter Faust at the beginning of act 4, he has been exposed, with the diabolical aid of Mephistopheles, to many realms of human experience: he has mastered all earthly knowledge, enjoyed the love of the simple Gretchen as well as the divine Helen of Troy, made pilgrimages into the past of classical antiquity, and descended into the mythic realm of the Mothers. Still unsatisfied (according to the terms of his wager with Mephisto) and driven by his restless spirit, he seeks new spheres of activity. At this moment his eye is drawn to the agitated sea, hurling its haughty waves in incessant rhythm upon the shore. The sight of the untamed elements precipitates a bold plan in his mind: to drive the imperious sea back from the shore and, in an act that postfigures the Creation, to bring forth new lands. (Dating from the Greek legend of the Argonauts and the odes of Horace, man's attempt to master the sea has often been regarded as a sinful violation worthy of punishment or even death.)

At the beginning of act 5, many years have passed and Faust is now, according to Goethe's intentions, one hundred years old. He has erected mighty dikes that hold back the sea, and the reclaimed land is divided neatly into tracts by great canals. In prosperous hamlets and on luscious meadows, a happy people pursues its fruitful activities while Faust himself savors his prosperity in a handsome palace surrounded by splendid gardens. Only one thing spoils his satisfaction. On a hillside behind his new territories, an elderly couple, refusing to vacate their

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land, have retained their humble cottage. Every time the bell tolls from the couple's chapel, it is an affront to his sense of total achievement. He orders Mephistopheles to remove Philemon and Baucis from his sight once and for all and to resettle them on the farm that he has set aside for them. But Mephisto and his three henchmen, carried away by their ardor, murder the old couple along with a guest in their cottage. Faust tries to disclaim responsibility for the butchery, but he cannot escape his guilt.

A veil of smoke from the burning cottage wafts across to his palace and materializes in the shape of four gray crones: Want, Debt, Distress, and Care. In the face of Faust's wealth and power, three of the crones are unable to gain entrance into the palace. But the fourth, Care, creeps in through the keyhole and, though Faust refuses to acknowledge her, strikes him blind. In the last hours before his death, the blinded Faust hastens to accomplish what he now regards as the crowning achievement of his life—an achievement that can finally be called social in contrast to the mainly technical accomplishment of the land reclamation. He intends to drain a foul swamp that infects the countryside and to create a safe environment for millions of people. As he hears the shovels ringing, Faust collapses and dies, unaware that the workmen are digging his grave and not the paradise that he foresaw in his last ecstatic vision. It is the final irony of Goethe's ironic masterpiece that, while Faust is redeemed at the end and delivered from Mephisto's grasping hands by choruses of angels, his engineering achievement is doomed. As Mephisto informs us casually in an aside, the land is destined to fall back into its watery state, reclaimed by Neptune, the great devil of the seas.

If we disregard the magical means used to achieve it as well as the ultimate failure of his magnum opus and look specifically at Faust's activity as an engineer, we see that his career displays not only the existential pleasures of engineering but also its anxieties. For we may freely but still accurately translate "Care" or *Sorge* as "anxiety." At this point, to achieve greater precision in our analysis, we can usefully borrow the categories of anxiety that Paul Tillich defines in *The Courage to Be*. Tillich suggests that existential anxiety displays three types, according to the "three directions in which nonbeing threatens being." It threatens man's *ontic* self-affirmation in the form of death; it threatens our *moral* self-affirmation in the form of guilt; and it threatens our *spiritual* self-affirmation in the form of meaninglessness. Now Faust, as it emerges, feels threatened especially by the two latter types. Ontic anxiety represents a less immediate concern since he feels protected from death by his wager with Mephistopheles. But the events of act 5 enable both moral and spiritual anxiety to enter his life.

The engineer, according to Tredgold's definition of 1828, is supposed

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to "direct the great sources of power in nature for the use and convenience of man." Faust succeeds magnificently in the first effort: he tames the sea, at least for a time. But even though he dreams of a social paradise, he comes to suffer moral anxiety when he sacrifices human beings for the sake of his great scheme and thereby sets his own independent ambitions in conflict with accepted norms. In Faust we see the archetype of every engineer who must weigh the social consequences of a new dam, a new highway, a new pesticide, or a new bomb.

But the scene has further implications. The unwanted presence of the old couple that amounts to a chaotic element in the disciplined order of Faust's seaside cosmos, the tinkling of their chapel bell that represents in his rational realm a reminder of the religious, the numinous, the irrational—these are features in which Goethe anticipates spiritual anxieties of the kind that later will torment literary engineers in the twentieth century when meaninglessness threatens the spiritual certainty that previously informed their existence. For the time being, however, writers of the later nineteenth century were primarily concerned with the other form of anxiety foreshadowed in Goethe's work: the moral anxiety produced when the engineer's grand schemes conflict with society's expectations.

The golden age of engineering got under way with an enormous sense of pride. In the introduction to his five-volume *Lives of the Engineers*, which began to appear in 1857, Samuel Smiles ventured to claim grandly that "our engineers may be regarded in some measure as the makers of modern civilization." Millions of believers flocked to the great exhibitions at which technology celebrated itself—1851 in London and 1867 in Paris, to cite two of the most famous. Yet the public festivities concealed private doubts. Among the writers of the age, there was no greater admirer of technological marvels than Jules Verne, who, in hugely successful fictions, imaginatively explored their extrapolations in the air, beneath the earth, and under the sea.

Of all Verne's *voyages extraordinaires*, none was more popular than *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, which he wrote in 1869. Thoroughly researched, as were all his books, the work is not so much a novel as a travelogue held together by the loosest of plots. As the *Nautilus* makes the eight-month journey that covers some twenty thousand leagues from the Sea of Japan by way of the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic from the South Pole to the coast of Norway, the reader is treated to an encyclopedic survey of the geography, geology, zoology, botany, and anthropology of the realms above and beneath the sea. The journey is punctuated by dramatic incidents: the great shark fight, the confrontation with the Papuans, the

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underwater burial of a crewman, the exploration of Atlantis, the battle with the giant squid, and finally the struggle with the maelstrom, in which the *Nautilus* disappears from the narrator's sight as abruptly as it had appeared months earlier. Above all, the book is a hymn to the wonders of that technology that the nineteenth century was so rapidly developing, a fact that distinguishes the novel from *Moby Dick*, with which it otherwise has a great deal in common, ranging from the demonic captain to the encyclopedic interests of the narrator. The *Nautilus* itself is specifically termed "a masterpiece of modern technology," and Verne devotes a good deal of space to explaining its engineering. His narrator calculates how much oxygen is needed for the occupants and speculates on how the air is purified. We learn how the electrical power providing the ship's energy is produced from the seawater. We are given an explanation of the power system that drives the propeller. We receive a detailed description of the diving suits that enable the sailors to roam the bottom of the sea. In short, the narrative betrays a writer obsessed with technology, and the success of the book suggests an audience fascinated with the accomplishments of engineering, both real and projected.

Much of the fascination for the *Nautilus* is transferred to its tutelary genius, Captain Nemo. When the narrator, Professor Aronnax, considers the *Nautilus*'s accomplishment, he remarks, "My admiration was boundless. And from the ship it extended to the engineer who had created this marvel." So intimately is the engineer related to his engine that "the vessel reflected his every mood as a body reflects its soul." Captain Nemo is by nineteenth century terms a jumble of contradictions. A trained engineer by profession, who has studied in London, Paris, and New York, he is at the same time a man of cultivation, at home with the world's literary classics, a refined collector of paintings, and a gifted organist. Most of his biography is left in mystery. We never discover his true name or nationality; we know that he lost his wife, his children, his parents, and his country to a terrible oppressor. That experience has made him into a benefactor of such oppressed minorities as the East Indians and Greeks, whom he provides with funds for their resistance. But the experience also provoked his "fierce, implacable defiance of human society," and that tension produces for the nineteenth century mind the peculiar fascination of Captain Nemo. For the engineer was expected, again according to Tredgold's classic definition, to put his ability at the service of society. Here, in contrast, the most brilliant engineer of the age has cut himself off from society and refuses to share his knowledge and abilities with mankind. "If his destiny is strange, it is also sublime," Professor Aronnax concludes his narrative, echoing the reaction of the age to this incongruous engineer.

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The Faustian heredity is also evident in the hero of Bernhard Kellermann's novel of 1913, *Der Tunnel* (*The Tunnel*). Hardly known today, the novel enjoyed a fabulous success, which attests to the continuing appeal of the engineering motif in literature. (By 1939 it was translated into twenty-five languages and went through 353 printings.) In fact, Kellermann's novel belongs to a subgenre of tunnel novels that includes such works as Emilio Salgari's *Duemila leghe sotto l'America* (1888), which describes the construction of a tunnel from Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, to Lake Titicaca in Peru, and Luigi Motta's *Il tunnel sottomarino* (1927), which revolves around a transatlantic tunnel destroyed by a terrorist. The action in Kellermann's book concerns the construction of a tunnel linking Europe and the United States, from a point near Toms River, New Jersey, by way of Bermuda, the Azores, and Spain to the coast of France. The appeal of the novel is attributable in no small measure to Kellermann's command of detail—from the financing of the vast project and the organizing of the huge labor force to the problems of construction itself. Kellermann, who traveled extensively in the United States, provides a convincing background for the action. The social criticism implicit in the work, which attacks capitalism and displays sympathy for the workers, makes it clear why Kellermann, after World War II, was acclaimed as a major figure in the literature of the German Democratic Republic.

The author of the great scheme—Mac Allan, who is called an "Odysseus of modern technology"—is utterly consumed by his project. The action begins at a concert in Madison Square Palace, where Mac goes to meet the financier who agrees to support his project. From the offices of the Tunnel Syndicate at the corner of Wall Street and Broadway and from the sprawling workers' colony at Tunnel City in New Jersey, the great construction is undertaken. Blind to human relations, Mac neglects his wife, Maud, and their daughter, Edith. In the seventh year of the project, an explosion kills almost three thousand workers. In the ensuing riots, Maud and Edith are stoned to death by a mob of enraged widows of tunnel workers, and Mac's best friend is driven mad by his experiences while trapped in the tunnel. Mac's business manager, having embezzled millions of dollars from the syndicate, commits suicide by hurling himself under a subway train at Columbus Circle. The death precipitates a worldwide financial panic; the Syndicate Building is destroyed by a fire; and a depression settles over the entire economic world. Mac, accused of deceiving the public, is condemned to six years in prison but is released following an appeal to the Supreme Court. Finally, he marries the financier's daughter in order to obtain support for the continuation of his project. Twenty-six years after its inception the grand scheme is completed, but Mac is a spent

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man. "Pale and exhausted, more thoughtful than joyous," Mac exemplifies the Faustian engineer whose obsession with technology and blindness in human affairs leads him to harm the very society in whose service he is supposed to be working.

If the tunnel in Kellermann's dense novel can be seen as an image for the hollowness of technological man, the bridge in Willa Cather's novella *Alexander's Bridge* (1912) has a more explicit symbolic function. Bartley Alexander is a forty-three-year-old Boston engineer at the peak of his career. A "tamer of rivers," he has completed ten bridges and is currently at work on a bold new project, a cantilevered bridge across the St. Lawrence River, which is described as "the most important piece of bridge-building going on in the world." We meet him at a moment that he regards as the "dread calm of middle life." Caught up in professional responsibilities and obligated by his wife's social position, this "Nestor *de pontibus*" fears that he is in danger of losing the very freedom he treasures. Just at this point, on a business trip to London, Alexander encounters the former love of his student days. Torn between his wife in Boston and his mistress in London, Alexander loses control. "I am not a man who can live two lives," he confesses. His distraction causes Alexander to neglect the project in Canada, which turns into "a continual anxiety." From the start he was constrained by a niggardly commission to use a lighter structural material than he thought proper. Just when he requires all his wits and skill, Alexander is distracted by his personal affairs. When the superintendent sends a telegram to warn him of dangerous strains, Alexander is with his mistress. By the time he reaches the construction site, it is too late. While he is inspecting the span, the cord of the cantilever arm snaps, the bridge collapses, and Alexander is drowned along with more than fifty workers.

In Willa Cather's novella, which is based on the collapse in 1907 of a bridge being built across the St. Lawrence near Quebec, the bridge clearly represents its builder. Early in the story Alexander's former professor tells him, "I always used to feel that there was a weak spot where some day strain would tell. . . . The more dazzling the front you presented, the higher your façade rose, the more I expected to see a big crack zigzagging from top to bottom." That somber forecast is repeated several times. When Alexander is torn between the two women, he imagines that "this, then, was to be the disaster that his old professor had foreseen for him: the crack in the wall, the crash, the cloud of dust." And at another point, in a comment that refers to nineteenth century technology as well as to Alexander, the narrator observes: "The mind that society had come to regard as a powerful and reliable machine, dedicated to its service, may for a long time have been sick within itself and

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bent upon its own destruction." The pontiff, or pontifex, is exposed ironically as the weakest of men.

Willa Cather's novella resembles the other pre–World War I engineering fictions. Like Captain Nemo's submarine and Mac Allan's tunnel, Alexander's bridge is an extension of its builder's psyche. All three engineers derive enormous existential pleasure from their accomplishments, which in every case involve the taming of the waters, as in *Faust*. Yet in their obsession with technology for its own sake, they become incapable of leading a normal social life. To the extent that their engineering feats are achieved at the cost of moral anxiety, all three are more or less explicit descendants of Goethe's Faust, whose dikes and canals, built by superhuman energies, require the sacrifice of innocent people and, ultimately, of the engineer himself.

Novels portraying the moral anxiety of engineering did not cease to be written after World War I, of course. Literary genres do not disappear so quickly. Some thirty years later Frederick Philip Grove's *Master of the Mill* (1944) recapitulates all the characteristics of the genre. In this powerful Canadian classic, the engineer Samuel Clark learns that his family's milling empire, which supplies 90 percent of the nation's flour, was founded by a criminal act of his father. Clark is unsuccessful in his efforts to assume the responsibility, to compensate for the crime by social welfare, and to protect his own son from the inherited guilt. His plans for social reform fail; the workers are displaced by technology; and his son is shot during a strike of the enraged millers. By the time Clark dies, he realizes that the great pyramidal mill of seventeen stories had always ruled his destiny and determined his every action. "The history of the mill had been his history"—as much so as the submarines, tunnels, and bridges of the earlier novels. Having destroyed its creator and disenfranchised its former workers, it survives as a symbol of the engineer's moral anxiety.

Yet the genre also adapted itself in the hands of other writers to reflect twentieth century views of engineering and technology. The Great War of 1914–1918 dramatized vividly the growing doubts regarding the benefits of technology. The engines of modern warfare exposed themselves as the dark mirror image of such engineering monuments as the Eiffel Tower, which had been proudly hailed as the symbol of the great Paris Exhibition of 1889. Whereas Samuel Smiles in 1857 had been able to characterize engineers as the "makers of modern civilization," the world after 1918 saw them once again in the etymological sense as inventors of war machines that were far more devastating than the battering ram that once acquired that name. A few technocrats, to be sure, envisaged a society rationally managed by engineers. In his papers on *The Engineers and the Price System* (1921), Thorstein Veblen

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proposed what he called a "soviet of technicians," a directorate of production engineers to replace the old-fashioned captains of finance, who lack the competence to manage an increasingly complex industrial system. Ten years later Ernst Jünger published his brilliant and controversial book entitled *Der Arbeiter* (literally "The Worker" but more accurately rendered as "The Technocrat"), in which he looked forward to a "labor democracy" (*Arbeitsdemokratie*) in which the total mobilization of human effort would be accomplished rationally by technology. In the United States, Herbert Hoover based his presidential campaign on the image of the master engineer who intended to solve the nation's economic problems by rational technological means. But most critics held a less optimistic view.

The thinker most conspicuously obsessed with the myth of technology during the period immediately after World War I was Oswald Spengler, who addressed the topic in the concluding chapters of *The Decline of the West* (1918–1922) and recapitulated his ideas ten years later in an essay entitled *Man and Technics*. To summarize Spengler's argument: Faustian man, in contrast to Apollonian man of classical antiquity, approaches nature not to understand it but to dominate it. The principal means of this domination is the machine, "the subtlest of all possible weapons against Nature." Gradually, however, man is enslaved by his creation because the machine has its own logic and laws, which man is obliged to follow. In order to control what Spengler calls the "satanism" of the machine, man enlists the aid of the engineer, "the knowing priest of the machine." As man becomes alienated from nature by technology and spiritually disoriented, "Faustian thought begins to be sick of machines," and this weariness forebodes what Spengler calls a "treason to technics." "The Faustian, west-European Culture is *probably* not the last, but *certainly* it is the most powerful, the most passionate, and—owing to the inward conflict between its comprehensive intellectuality and its profound spiritual disharmony—the most tragic of them all."

Spengler argued that the "problem" of technics first became evident in the nineteenth century, and so it was appropriate that the literary engineers of that period were Faustian types, titanic geniuses whose obsession with their great projects—submarines, tunnels, bridges—cut them off from society. Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924) represents the ironic culmination of that tradition: its hero, Hans Castorp, is an engineer (a shipbuilder, of course) who never manages to practice his profession and who is eventually killed on the battlefields of World War I by a cannon shell, "the product of a perverted science." However, it remained for Mann's contemporary, Franz Kafka, to expose the true "satanism" of the machine, to display the tragedy of an engineer

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who is anything but a "knowing priest of the machine," and to attack through parodistic exaggeration the claims of the technocrats.

A lawyer by training, Kafka was a close observer of technology from his position in the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute of Bohemia. In 1909 he attended a series of lectures on mechanical engineering at the Technical University of Prague in an effort to prepare himself better for his work. It is hardly surprising that engineers show up in so many of his literary works, as, for example, in "The Visit to a Mine," which depicts the inspection of a mine by eleven engineers, each of whom is described in meticulous detail by a worker who fails to understand the reason for their presence. One of Kafka's favorite parodistic devices is the demythification of myth by translating it into contemporary terms, and here again engineering plays a prominent role. In the parable entitled "Poseidon" he achieves a humorous effect by describing the god of the seas in terms suggesting a hydraulic engineer. Similarly, "The City Arms" describes the Tower of Babel in terms of construction timetables, workers' housing, and strikes. Indeed, the protagonists in two of his three novels must be called frustrated engineers. Neither is a true engineer though both aspire to be one. In addition, their rational minds are constantly frustrated by the irrationality of reality.

One of the first things we learn about Karl Rossmann in Kafka's *Amerika* is that he had wished to become an engineer—an ambition thwarted by his forced emigration to the New World. When we lose sight of him at the end of the novel, he has just been signed on to the great Nature Theater of Oklahoma as a "technical worker." This is not mere chance. Rossmann, a guileless youngster, regards society as a mechanism that you need to understand in order to get ahead. It is his overriding concern to comprehend rationally the chaotic organizations that he encounters in the New World. The profession that strikes him (and Kafka) as most appropriate for getting ahead in America is, predictably, engineering. Similarly, K., the hero of Kafka's last fragmentary novel, *The Castle*, claims to be a land surveyor, that is, a kind of civil engineer. It is never absolutely clear whether he actually is a land surveyor or merely claims to be one. (The German term *Landvermesser* implies a degree of arrogance and arrogation.) Certainly in the course of the novel he has no assignment; indeed, the whole novel concerns his efforts to get a job. But he has the mentality of the engineer: he attempts to approach the mysterious Castle rationally and pragmatically, only to be frustrated to the very end by the refusal of its irrational aspects to accommodate themselves to rational analysis.

In none of Kafka's writings, however, is the technological mentality so mercilessly scrutinized as in his powerful parable, "In the Penal Colony." This is not to say that the story is primarily about engineering.

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Its meaning has been persuasively interpreted from the standpoint of religion, politics, law, and the literary life. At the same time, it is undeniable that Kafka chose engineering images to give shape to his technological nightmare. Indeed, the unusual execution apparatus with its three parts—Bed, Harrow, and Designer—is described in such elaborate technical detail (it takes up roughly a third of the narrative) that the attentive reader can draw an accurate blueprint from Kafka's specifications. Now the story that revolves around this instrument of terror—which engraves the judgment on the prisoner's body during twelve hours of torment—can be interpreted not only as a parable for the agony of writing and the displacement of a cruel old religion or political system or legal system by a more humane new one, but it can also be read—and given Kafka's expressed interest in engineering probably should be read—as an allegory of modern technological society and even a condemnation of technocracy in the sense of Veblen and Jünger.

The former commandant who invented the machine, it will be recalled, was not only a soldier and judge but also an engineer—a satanic Captain Nemo. Here in the isolated penal colony he has created a technocrat's dream: an absolutely rational society. The colony is orderly; the rules are simple, clear, and well defined; any transgression is met by instant punishment. But hard times have come upon this insular technocracy. The old commandant has died and been buried in disgrace. The new commandant is looking for an opportunity to do away with the harsh old order along with its terrible machine. The officer who still devotedly mans the machine is a skilled technician who loves to repair it with his own screwdriver. But like the engineering heroes of the pre-1914 fiction, he is so naive in human affairs that he does not notice the indifference with which others regard his beloved apparatus. The traveling research scholar, whose appearance triggers the action, is appalled by this evidence of technocratic brutality that has survived on the remote island. The condemned soldier exemplifies modern mass-man, no longer capable of comprehending the technology from which he benefits—or suffers. The ending of the tale lends a further dimension of ironic meaning. When the traveler refuses to assist the officer in his plan to win support for the machine, the officer releases the prisoner who was to be punished and takes his place on the machine, hoping to experience the same moment of blissful enlightenment that he has witnessed on the faces of hundreds of earlier victims. But suddenly technology goes wild: the machine turns itself on and, as gears and cogwheels crash out of the control box, self-destructs without bringing any enlightenment to the tortured officer. Kafka, who as a specialist for workmen's compensation knew only too well the dangers of machines, has exposed not only the perils of technocracy but also the mentality of the Faustian engineer

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who, insensitive to the feelings of others, is finally destroyed by his own machine and quite literally, in a modern sense, "hoist[ed] with his own petar."

While the writers and thinkers of the period during and immediately after World War I—like Spengler and Mann and Kafka—were usually concerned with the tragic consequences of nineteenth century Faustian technology, satanic machines, and a world weary of engineering, the following generation confronted a world without choice. They saw mankind as both destined and doomed to technology, which had turned out to be the inescapable condition of modern human existence. In *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930) Ortega y Gasset argued that contemporary mass-man is the direct product of "technicism," which provides him with the material comforts he has grown to crave but whose production he is incapable of understanding or controlling. Karl Jaspers, in the introduction to *Man in the Modern Age* (*Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, 1931), stated that the conspicuously new phenomenon that characterizes and determines our times is the "sudden emergence of the technical world." Martin Heidegger devoted a major essay to "The Question Concerning Technology" (*Die Technik und die Kehre*, 1953) in the recognition that "everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it." Yet despite this extensive philosophical attention, Arnold Gehlen began his social-psychological analysis of *Man in the Age of Technology* (*Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter*, 1957) with the claim that "our own society has not yet finished its internal debate over the radical changes in its nature which are associated with the advance of industrialization."

This is precisely the task the writers have set for themselves. No longer interested in the titanic Faustian engineer obsessed with his bold undertakings, they are fascinated by the mentality of the men who produce and, in turn, are produced by the all-embracing technological society. The engineer becomes the model of the rational mind that, as the product of the rationalization of the human spirit, has ended by excluding the irrational from its ken. The writers want to observe what happens to engineers when elements of chaos suddenly intrude into their ordered cosmos—when, as in Goethe's *Faust*, the tinkle of the chapel bell reminds them that the rational order of their society is not quite perfect after all. The effect of this conflict between cosmos and chaos, between mythos and logos, is the spiritual anxiety of the engineer. Fittingly, it is in the fiction of two writers who began their careers as technologists and then, disenchanted, rejected technology for literature that we can most clearly observe this shift.

Robert Musil, a trained engineer, studied at the Technical Institute at Brno in Moravia, where his father was a professor. So brilliant was Musil

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at science, mathematics, and engineering that in 1902 he was offered, and accepted, a position as research assistant at the Technical Institute at Stuttgart, which at that time had the finest laboratory for mechanical engineering in Europe. Within a year, Musil gave up his technical career and went to Berlin to study philosophy. His early training, however, shows up in almost all his subsequent writing, for the typical hero—like Ulrich, the protagonist of his monumental novel *The Man Without Qualities*—is a former engineer of great mathematical sophistication who comes to the conclusion that rationality alone does not suffice to explain reality. "Rationality and mysticism are the poles of the age," Musil noted in his journal, and the characters who interest him are torn between the two extremes.

An exemplary figure in this connection is Homo, the protagonist of Musil's story "Grigia" (1921). Although Homo is not precisely an engineer, he is a scientist, a geologist, and, during the course of the events narrated in the story, functions as a member of a five-man team that has undertaken an engineering expedition to open up an ancient Venetian gold mine in the North Italian Alps. Up to this point Homo's technological faith has never been put to the test. Independently wealthy, happily married, the father of a small son, he has been able to afford to dedicate his life to his studies. "In every life there comes a period when life conspicuously slows down, as though it hesitated to go on or wanted to change its course," the tale begins. "It may be that in such periods a misfortune may more easily befall one." Just at such a point in his middle age, Homo receives the invitation to participate in the mining expedition. Since he is free for the summer—his wife has accompanied their sickly son to a spa—he accepts. The journey not only takes him out of his normal contexts of family and study, it also removes him from the lowlands, where rationality prevails, and takes him five thousand feet up into a mountain valley where life is still, in many senses, ancient and mythic. The inhabitants of the valley are German Protestants who fled there at the time of Martin Luther and who still preserve in their culture and language evidence of the sixteenth century in the heart of modern Europe. This is the primal power to which Homo is exposed, and he discovers that the veneer of rationality does not suffice to shield him from its force.

In the course of the summer, Homo drifts into an affair with a peasant woman whom he calls Grigia—borrowing the name that she calls her gray cow—a woman of earthly passion who is as fully at home in the natural world as her animals. After a time Grigia fears that her husband has become suspicious of the liaison. She agrees to meet Homo one final time, but to avoid discovery they go not to one of their usual trysts but to an abandoned mine shaft. As they lie in the dark, he suddenly sees the

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silhouette of her husband at the opening of the shaft. Then everything becomes dark. The jealous husband has pushed a large boulder in front of the mouth. Grigia, reduced to screeching animality in her terror, eventually discovers an escape from the shaft. The opening is too narrow for Homo to follow; Homo is too weary or too indifferent to attempt to find a further escape route; and in the last line we are told that his fellow engineers have just decided to conclude their own rescue efforts. Musil's somber story is so openly parabolic that it leaves little to hermeneutical ingenuity. Homo represents *Homo faber,* modern technological man, who, when removed from his accustomed rational contexts and confronted with the raw eros of Grigia, is unable to maintain himself. So debilitated is he by his rationality, moreover, that he succumbs weakly to his destiny. The ambiguity of technology is exposed in the mine shaft, which, itself a product of technology, becomes the locus of Homo's self-destruction.

While the protagonist of Musil's story, as his name suggests, is primarily a human being and only secondarily a technologist, the emphasis is completely reversed in Max Frisch's novel *Homo faber* (1957), whose hero is the modern technologist personified to such an extreme that he seems only secondarily a human being. Walter Faber, a fifty-year-old engineer, works for UNESCO as a technical adviser for underdeveloped countries. He does not read novels and has never been to the opera; despite many business trips to Paris, he has never visited the Louvre; he lacks interest in history, folklore, or myth. He does not care for flowers or natural beauty and shaves himself obsessively because the slightest trace of beard makes him feel that he is reverting into a plant. He winds his watch constantly to reassure himself that time and schedules—those emblems of technological society—are still in effect. "We live technologically," he remarks at one point in his report, "man as the dominator of nature, man as engineer, and anyone who speaks against it should use no bridges that nature hasn't built." Virtually the only disruptive element in the personality of this dedicated engineer who loves machines and longs for turbines is the fact that he protests too defensively about his occupation. "I have no need of inferiority complexes, I do my job, it is not my ambition to be an inventor, but I believe that I do at least as much as a Baptist from Ohio, who makes fun of engineers." It is this protest that reminds us that Walter Faber is the protagonist in a novel by Max Frisch—a protagonist, that is to say, who has constructed for himself a role behind which he can conceal himself from a reality he distrusts.

Walter Faber does not believe in destiny and fate. "As a technician I am accustomed to calculate with the formulas of probability." The three-month series of events recounted in Faber's journal, however, confronts

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him with the vagaries of chance, the failure of technology, and the power of myth—factors that for fifty years he has scrupulously tried to exclude from his carefully engineered life. The stomach cancer that kills Faber within a few months announces itself on the first pages, as Faber is flying from La Guardia Airport on his way to supervise an installation in Caracas. On the flight from Houston to Mexico City the first of the accidents occurs, a technical failure that causes the Super-Constellation to make an emergency landing in the Mexican wilderness. Thrown off schedule as a result of this crash, Faber does something wholly out of character: he accompanies a recent acquaintance on a side trip to a plantation in Guatemala to visit a friend from his student days. The friend, as it turns out, has hanged himself, but the incident generates in Faber, who lives almost wholly in the present, memories of his past. He relives the love affair of his student years at the Technical Institute in Zurich with a young Jewish archaeologist named Hanna and their subsequent separation when he went off to his first job in Baghdad, while she emigrated to England and married. When Faber finally gets back to New York, a quarrel with his mistress prompts him to take a ship to Europe the next day rather than waiting a week for his scheduled flight.

Again, only sheer chance and a technological flaw—a delay caused by his electric razor—causes Faber to be in his apartment when the travel agency phones to notify him of the sailing. On the ship, which he has reached by this series of accidents, he meets a young woman with whom he becomes infatuated. Almost casually he continues the affair in Paris. When she announces her intention to hitchhike home to Athens, he decides to borrow a car and drive her. Along the way, in Avignon, they become lovers for the first time. Shortly before they reach Athens, Faber and Sabeth are bathing on the beach near Corinth. She is bitten by a viper; when Faber rushes to help her, she stumbles over a low balustrade and strikes her head. The resulting concussion causes her death. In the hospital Faber encounters Sabeth's mother, who turns out to be his former mistress, Hanna. Sabeth, he learns, was his own daughter, conceived shortly before their separation. Within a few weeks of learning this shocking news, Faber dies in the course of an operation for stomach cancer. A mythic tragedy produced by chance—or is it fate?—is followed by an unpredictable death inaccessible to technological miracles.

Frisch's novel displays conspicuous parallels to Musil's story. In both cases an engineer entering middle age ventures out of the contexts of rationality that have hitherto afforded security. Both of them leave the realm identified with technology—the lowlands of central Europe and New York City—and move toward realms dominated by myth, where

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they meet women who embody that dimension. Faber's former lover, Hanna, though far more sophisticated, is no less involved with chthonic powers through her archaeology than is Grigia. In both cases, finally, technological man is destroyed by the numinous powers that he had long attempted to deny and ignore, if not to subdue.

Frisch's compelling analysis of contemporary technological man was written by an author trained at the Technical Institute in Zurich and who was, for more than ten years, a practicing architect, until literary success enabled him to establish himself as an independent writer. Like Musil, Frisch approaches engineering not in ignorance or hostility but with the critical understanding of the technologist who has experienced both the existential pleasures and the spiritual anxieties of the discipline. Both writers are in agreement with those post-Spenglerian thinkers who have endeavored not to decry technology but to acknowledge it as the necessary condition of modern society. At the same time, their fictions lead to the conclusion that we must seek to understand the limits of technology if we are to lead balanced lives. They oppose the mentality—in their readers as well as their heroes—that assumes that all reality is accessible to technological control.

Engineering may not have its Shakespeare, and that is perhaps just as well if we remember the fate of engineers in Shakespeare's works. But engineering does have its Goethe and its Kafka, its Musil and its Frisch, not to mention Jules Verne, Willa Cather, Thomas Mann, Frederick Grove, and such others as Thomas Pynchon—all of whom have come to grips with the profession that they regard as exemplary for modern technological society. These writers have shown that the engineer, on his way from Faust to Faber, has come to know not simply the existential pleasures of engineering but also its anxieties, both moral and spiritual.

The record would not be complete, however, if we stopped at this point without listening to the voice of one scientist-turned-writer who has never tired of reminding us that even anxiety, in the last analysis, is a cultural luxury available only to those—including the engineers—who live in secure societies. It is not ultimately the numinous power of myth that imposes constraints on technology but the very real power of politics. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who studied math and physics at the University of Rostov from 1938 to 1941, has repeatedly proclaimed an almost mystical faith in the value of work, amounting to what some critics have called a cult of technology. This attitude is nowhere more strongly evident than in *August 1914* (1971), the first part of what the author has planned as a multivolume work on the events that determined the destiny of Russia in the twentieth century. Few readers can have missed the hints, including a walk-on appearance in the opening pages by Tolstoy himself, that the enterprise is meant at least in part as a

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contemporary response to *War and Peace*. The first volume, dealing almost wholly with the disastrous East Prussian campaign and Russia's decisive defeat at the battle of Tannenberg, has more to do with war than with peace. Almost at the end, however, the author introduces two wholly new characters in a memorable scene set in Rostov-on-Don. Ilya Isakovich Arkhangorodsky and Svyatoslav Iakinfovich Obodovsky, both successful engineers at the peak of their powers, are in 1914 still motivated by a nineteenth century confidence in technology. Arkhangorodsky graduated from the Kharkov Technological Institute with the first class in milling engineering. Now in his midforties, he represents a number of engineering firms in southeast Russia and has contributed significantly to the prosperity of Rostov by his part in constructing the new municipal grain elevator and the great Paramonov mill. The thirty-six-year-old mining engineer, Obodovsky, has a different background: having only recently returned from political exile, where he made his reputation by writing widely acclaimed books on a variety of engineering and business topics, he is now bursting with energy—like a samovar filled with boiling water, as he puts it—and eager to serve his country.

The two engineers, who have met on this day for the first time, spend a pleasant morning inspecting the mills and discussing the future of technology. "Give us ten years of peaceful development and you won't recognize Russian industry—or Russian agriculture, for that matter," Obodovsky assures the older man. Convinced in the spirit of Thorstein Veblen and Ernst Jünger that the Union of Engineers is more constructive than any political party, he believes that it "could easily become one of the leading forces in Russia." Arkhangorodsky shares Obodovsky's obsession with technology, but—older, cooler, more experienced, more realistic—he is aware of the human factor. "Always provided, Svyatoslav Iakinfovich, that we don't decide to rip each other's guts out in the meantime."

Lunchtime at the Arkhangorodsky house produces a heated discussion, in which two young social revolutionaries—the daughter, Sonya, and her friend Naum—reproach the two engineers for their political stance. Sonya is furious because her father recently participated in a patriotic demonstration held by the Rostov Jews as a gesture of allegiance to Russia and the czar. They also seize the opportunity to attack Obodovsky because the former anarchist is now willing to put his energy and ability at the service of an industry that, according to them, exploits its workers. The young people are not impressed by the argument that production, itself neither capitalist nor socialist, creates national wealth, "the common material basis without which no country can exist." Eventually bored by the discussion, Obodovsky turns away to chat with

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Arkhangorodsky's wife while his host patiently tries to convince the two young idealists that revolution is "a long and insane process of destruction" that tears countries apart. His daughter, growing increasingly angry, finally shouts that he has simply capitulated to the forces of repression through his homage to the Black Hundreds. Hurt by his daughter's reproaches, his voice shaking with emotion, Arkhangorodsky replies, " 'On one side—the Black Hundreds; on the other—the Red Hundreds! And in the middle—' he formed his hands into the shape of a ship's keel—'a dozen people who want to pass through to get on with a job of work! Impossible!' He opened his hands and clapped them together. 'They are crushed—flattened!' " With this confrontation between youth, with its dreams of revolution and experience, with its faith in progress through technology, the chapter ends, and the two engineers disappear from the novel—at least from this first volume. Yet the possibilities that they represent are already clearly defined.

Even before the implications of World War I are evident, Arkhangorodsky senses the political threat to the development of technology. In *The First Circle*—a novel written several years before *August 1914* but dealing with a much later period in Russian history—Solzhenitsyn depicts in no uncertain terms what can happen to engineers in a totalitarian state. The novel, based on the author's own experiences, takes place in 1949 in the Mavrino *sharashka*, a special prison on the outskirts of Moscow where a group of prisoners with technical skills—in mathematics, physics, linguistics, and engineering—have been assembled to develop an electronic device that will enable the police to identify telephone users by their voice patterns. In the course of his "polyphonic" novel, Solzhenitsyn explores a variety of responses by technologists who are pressured to cooperate in a project to support the regime that has imprisoned them—from those like Rubin, who try to rationalize their complicity by ideology, or Sologdin, by cool calculation manipulating the regime for his own benefit, to Nerzhin (the author's own persona), who as a matter of principle refuses cooperation on any terms and then freely accepts the harsh consequences.

If *The First Circle* analyzes the dangers to the free development of technology anticipated in 1914 by Arkhangorodsky—its corruption by political tyranny—Solzhenitsyn elsewhere expresses his disappointment at what might be called the Obodovsky option—the tendency of the engineer, bubbling over with his own ideas, to turn away from any political commitment. In *The First Circle* Nerzhin rejects those he calls the "Rosicrucians," those technologists who retreat from the world of politics into an absolute realm of science and mathematics. Solzhenitsyn returned to that topic in his Nobel Lecture of 1972. "One might have thought that the structure of the modern world would be entirely in the

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hands of scientists, since it is they who decide all the technical steps of mankind," he begins in a tone reminiscent of Obodovsky. "One might have thought that the direction in which the world is to move would be determined by a world-wide concord of scientists, not of politicians. . . . But no, scientists have made no explicit attempt to become an important independently-motivated force within mankind. Entire congresses of them back away from the suffering of others; it is cozier to remain within the limits of science."

Solzhenitsyn implies that the social and existential anxieties that dominated earlier literary portrayals of the engineer become irrelevant in the face of political dilemmas that demand an immediate response of conscience. His conclusion is poignant precisely because he started out with a sublime golden age confidence in the ability of engineering to rule the world rationally, only to have his vision smashed by the reality of politics in Stalin's Russia. But if the dark world of *The First Circle* is not anticipated in *Faust*, it is foreshadowed in the myth of Daedalus, who sold out to the regime and still ended up in that Minoan *sharashka* known as the Labyrinth. Solzhenitsyn returns obsessively in his writing to the Russia that he left a decade ago, taking time out occasionally to scold the West for what he perceives as our moral laxity. Many Western observers have been put off by Solzhenitsyn's Slavophilism, but we would be shortsighted if we permitted the current disenchantment with what may seem his nagging self-righteousness to distract us from the real and urgent questions he has raised. Can we afford to contemplate his fictions with smug detachment? In which Dantean circle are our own government-financed research institutes located? At what point does the cooptation of technology in our own world demand that the existential anxieties of the engineers give way to the absolute claims of conscience? These are questions whose urgency transcends the trivial cliché of Two Cultures, which has for too long dominated what sometimes passes for thought among humanists and engineers alike.

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Remembering the Koestlers

GEORGE MIKES

One day when I was dining with the Koestlers, a gushing and overenthusiastic American lady dropped in for a drink. She told Arthur how pleased, honored, and overwhelmed she was to be in the presence of so great a man. When she said it for the fifth time, Arthur told her, "My dear young lady, to like a writer and then to meet the writer is like loving goose liver and then meeting the goose." As it happens, I knew the goose intimately—and still love goose liver. So the lines below will not be so much an obituary or an assessment as the remembrance of—and final tears for—a friend.

On Monday, February 28, 1983, I traveled to Lausanne, Switzerland. On the Sunday evening before my departure, my friend Marietta and I were invited to the Koestlers' for dinner. On such occasions, which were frequent, we appeared at six o'clock and played two games of Scrabble before dinner, with sometimes a third game after it. At the Koestler's we played Scrabble in the dining room; dinner we had in the kitchen. On Sunday morning I went to play tennis. Returning at about 12:30 I found a message on my telephone answering machine from Cynthia Koestler, asking me to ring them back. "It's about tonight," the message said.

When I rang, Cynthia told me that Arthur's Parkinson's was bad that day, so he would not be able to play Scrabble, but we should come for dinner all the same. In the past, when Arthur had not been feeling too well, he had always asked us to postpone the visit entirely. He hated to be seen when his hands were trembling, and in any case, he got tired very quickly. So I ought to have found this "come for dinner anyway" a little strange, but I did not.

"Oh no," I told Cynthia, "if Arthur is not well, we'll postpone it. I'll be back from Switzerland in ten days, then we'll come for dinner *and* play Scrabble."

"Splendid," said Cynthia.

On such occasions she almost always added: "Wait a minute. Arthur wants to have a word with you." This time she said nothing. Even in this I found nothing extraordinary. After all, I had just been informed that Arthur was in poor shape.

On Friday morning, March 4, I was getting dressed in my son's flat in Lausanne, when he phoned me from Geneva, where he works. "I have very sad news for you," Martin told me. "Mr. and Mrs. Koestler have been found dead in their drawing room." I thanked him for the information and put the receiver down. I cannot say that I was stunned or even shocked. I always receive horrible news calmly. I am a delayed-action man. It is a few hours, sometimes a few days, later that the full impact hits me.

My first thoughts were regret that I had not seen the Koestlers on Sunday. Then I clearly recalled Cynthia's word: "Splendid." Now it sounded ominous. I was not sure whether I was imagining it, influenced by the powerful force of hindsight, but now it seemed that the voice had sounded melancholy, even a trifle mocking. She knew—I now felt—that we would not have dinner together ever again. Nor should we ever again play Scrabble. Not in this world. Perhaps in the other one, in which I do not believe, though Arthur did, in a fashion.

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Perhaps he was right, I thought—as he so often was during his long and bellicose life—and we still would have a chance of continuing our games: a pleasant outlook for eternity. But rereading once again his thoughts on this matter, I see that, according to him, while death does not mean total extinction, it does not mean a prolonged heavenly existence either. It means, in Arthur's words, "merging into cosmic consciousness." The process of dying is "the flow of a river into the ocean," he explained. "The river has been freed of the mud that clung to it and regained its transparency. It has become identified with the sea, spread over it, omnipresent in every drop, catching a spark of the sun." This is a little too imaginative for my prosaic mind. But whatever I may make of it, it does not sound like games of Scrabble on the Elysian fields. What a pity!

In the autumn of 1952, I wrote a long article for the *Times Literary Supplement* on Endre Ady, the great Hungarian poet. Soon afterward Alan Pryce-Jones, then editor of the *TLS*, asked me to agree to lift the journal's old anonymity rule because Arthur Koestler would like to meet the author. I replied that anonymity was the *TLS*'s rule, not mine; I would not mind seeing all my articles signed (as indeed is the rule nowadays) and would be delighted to meet Mr. Koestler.

Koestler has described his own shyness and confusion when he met Freud and Thomas Mann, two men he greatly admired. He felt both occasions ended in disaster. I was almost as much impressed by him as he was by those two great men, but I do not remember feeling shy or confused at our first meeting. Still, I was apprehensive and prepared for the death of an illusion.

Pryce-Jones's request reached me in New York. On arrival back in London, I phoned Koestler. We spoke English. It is a curious psychological fact that, when Hungarians meet in Britain (and I presume also in the United States), the use of our mother tongue assumes a degree of intimacy. It seems like using a secret language, a code, a lingo "they" do not understand. He told me that he wanted to meet me, and when I said I would be delighted, he asked me where we could meet. I said I would go and visit him. "Why should you come to see me, when I want something from you?" But, go I did.

When we sat down in his study, on the fourth floor in his house at Montpelier Square, we exchanged a few words, this time in Hungarian. He suddenly stopped and said that I must forgive him for his bad and halting Hungarian, but he had not spoken the language for eight years. I did not know him well enough to say that, as far as accent went, his Hungarian sounded much better than his English, so I replied, "Let's speak English then, if it is easier for you." He answered with a broad grin, "Mikes, you and I should sit here, on a fourth floor in Knightsbridge, and *we* should speak English? Impossible." It was at that moment that I closed him in my heart. He never left that place.

I had been wondering, of course, what Arthur Koestler could possibly want from me. He asked me if I knew Attila József. I told him I did. Attila József was a great poet, the last genius among four or five geniuses who wrote in Magyar, that strange and tragically isolated language, lost to the world at large. Attila and Arthur became great friends in 1935, when Koestler visited Budapest. Soon after Koestler's departure, Attila became mad, suffering from schizophrenia and, throwing himself in front of a freight train, killed himself. Koestler was writing the second volume of his autobiography and wanted to discuss Attila with someone else who knew him. He also asked me if I had a photograph of Attila, which I happened to have. (In those crazy days of the Rákosi terror it was no simple matter just to write to Hungary and ask for a photo of one of the nation's greatest poets.)

Arthur asked me if I had ever tried to translate any of Attila's poems into English. I said I had not. He persuaded me that we should translate some of his poetry together, and he confessed, somewhat sheepishly, that he had experimented with it already. After some persuasion he agreed to show me some of his translations. A curious period followed. We both neglected almost all other work to translate Attila's poems into English. Arthur normally never spoke of work in progress, but this time it was different. I never saw him work on anything with greater enthusiasm. He would telephone four times a day: "Listen to this. . . ."

We never thought of publishing our translations in book form—indeed, we refused to show them outside a very intimate circle. But

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both his publisher and mine pressed us to publish, and though we hesitated a little, we remained rather reluctant. Koestler got hold of W. H. Auden—then professor of poetry at Oxford—and showed him our work. "I asked him," he informed me a day or two later, "whether these translations convey the impression that their author was one of the greatest poets of the century." He paused. "And what did Auden say?" I had to prompt him. "He is a polite man. All he said was: 'No, they don't.'" That was the end of our first—and last—joint literary enterprise, though some of Arthur's translations appeared in his autobiographical volume, *The Invisible Writing*.

From that time until his death I remained Arthur's Hungarian friend. I do not mean his friend who happened to be Hungarian, but someone who performed a special function and fulfilled a particular need for him. Arthur's way of speaking Hungarian improved; he polished his language quickly enough. He would ask me for the right word now and then, and when he did, it was no good to offer him a vague synonym. It had to be the mot juste, however long it took to find it. Cynthia, who soon appeared on the scene, first as Arthur's secretary, later as his lover, wife, nurse, housekeeper, cook, mother, daughter, and inseparable companion, would always say, "I'll leave you to jabber in Hungarian."

"Wait a minute, Cynthia," I used to say. "We are only jabbering because you don't know the language. Unknown languages are always jabbered. Only when you learn them are they spoken. We are, in fact, talking Hungarian, not jabbering."

She smiled in her sweet and gentle way and agreed. But whenever she withdrew in the next thirty years, it was in order to let us jabber in Hungarian. We never rose to the dignity of speaking it.

Before that famous football match in the midfifties, between Hungary and England, Arthur asked me which side I supported. I was taken aback. "I am a British subject now," I replied. "My loyalties belong to Britain. Naturally, I shall support England." Arthur shook his head. "Patriotism is one thing; football patriotism quite another."

How right he was. I went to see the match for the newspaper *News Chronicle* with Vicky, the cartoonist, another Hungarian and another staunch Briton. After the first Hungarian goal—which came thirty seconds after the beginning—Vicky and I stood up and applauded. We were nearly thrown out of the press box. In the press box you don't applaud at all. And most certainly not for the enemy.

The next occasion when Arthur and I found ourselves to be Hungarian patriots—and not merely football patriots—was much more serious. It was in 1956, the night when the Revolution broke out. At 2:30 A.M. on October 24, 1956, my telephone rang. It was Arthur. He told me that he was with a friend, a Hungarian journalist, near Eaton Place (where the Hungarian legation is located). They had collected a few bricks from a building site, and they wanted me to join them immediately so that together we could throw the bricks through the windows of the Hungarian legation.

"I'll come, of course, if you want me to," I replied, "but will you tell me what this is in aid of?"

"It's clear enough, I think," Arthur told me curtly. "We want to draw attention to events in Hungary."

I told him that if he wanted to do something, as he always did, if he wanted to act in order to let off steam and wanted me to be there, I would come. But considering the fact that all the newspapers were carrying huge headlines about Hungary, and that radio and television were dealing with hardly anything else, I believed that drawing attention to the Hungarian Revolution was somewhat superfluous. So what did I suggest, he asked me angrily. Just to sit down and do nothing? Just to go and sleep in our comfortable beds while people were fighting and dying on the streets of Budapest? We would not be helping those people, I insisted, by making our beds less comfortable. Nor by throwing bricks. I suggested that we should go to bed—or, in my case, return to bed—and meet the next day to discuss whether we could do something more effective. There was a short pause, then Arthur burst out: "Damn your moderation!" and slammed the receiver down. Next morning we heard that thirteen bricks had been thrown through the windows of the Hungarian legation. Whether Arthur's were among them, I never asked.

The cry "Damn your moderation!" reverberated in my ears for years afterward. Moderation was a major irritation to Arthur. Harold

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Harris, his friend, publisher, and literary executor, told me that after Arthur's death, he found some notebooks in which Arthur had put down some ideas, aphorisms, apothegms, and various stray thoughts. As time passed and his illness progressed, his entries became less and less frequent. In 1983 there was one single entry. It read: "Thou shalt not carry moderation into excess." That was the last thing of a literary kind Arthur ever put down on paper.

During the Hungarian uprising we did arrange a huge public meeting with a number of distinguished speakers, but people were really interested in Koestler and demanded to hear him. At the meeting the shouts of "Koestler! Koestler!" became deafening. At last Arthur stood up and told the audience that he had just published his farewell to politics (in the introduction to *The Trail of the Dinosaur*, he noted: "Cassandra has grown hoarse") and vowed never to write or speak on the subject again. To everybody's regret he refused to break his promise. That was his last public appearance as a Hungarian. But in 1964, when I returned to Hungary and talked to people in the foreign ministry, I suggested that a visa should be granted to Arthur who was once again ready, indeed keen, to visit the country of his birth. The officials were taken aback, but a few months later I was informed that a visa was at Mr. Koestler's disposal. Arthur spent his summers in Austria in those days and went to the Hungarian consulate in Vienna to collect his visa. He was most courteously received, but before the consul stamped the visa into his passport, he asked for assurances that Arthur would not write anything about his visit. Koestler—who, in fact, did not intend to write about this visit—would not submit to such a condition. He said no, took his passport back, and never visited Hungary again.

Arthur Koestler's books were published in (I believe) thirty-three languages but not in Hungarian. He always regretted this. I took some steps in 1970 and 1979 to rectify this omission, but the result was that the Hungarian government refused to publish my books, too, although I had signed a contract with one of the Budapest publishing houses for an anthology. I was told that "economic conditions" did not allow the publication of Koestler's books. Or mine.

So the greatest prose writer Hungary ever produced has never been published in his own country at all. Not yet. However, Arthur's *Darkness at Noon* was published in Hungarian about a year before his death by an émigré publisher in West Germany. Alas, it came much too late to give him any real pleasure.

I once told Cynthia that, though I met Koestler in 1952, she, according to my best recollections, did not appear on the scene for quite a few years. "But I was there, pretty much in the background," she told me with a smile that was a little shy, even though thirty years had passed since then, and now she was Arthur's wife. Not that Cynthia was secretive. Whenever I asked a straight question about her South African childhood or her family, I got a straight answer. She was quite pleased to talk about these matters. She was intelligent, openhearted, kind, very pretty, and completely without malice. She did not talk about herself because she regarded the subject as unimportant and uninteresting. She thought of herself as Arthur Koestler's wife, and she was perfectly content with that role.

Harold Harris told me that he had found among the Koestlers' papers the beginning of an autobiography written by Cynthia. Having written a few chapters, Arthur and Cynthia must have discussed the matter and decided to write a joint autobiographical work: one chapter to be written by her, one by him. There are about six such alternating chapters altogether, then they abandoned the project. Harold told me that Cynthia wrote about her childhood (I quote from memory): "I was born in South Africa. At the age of twenty-one I left that country." So much for her childhood. Then, of a later period of her life: "I married a man called Patterson. The marriage was not a success and we divorced after a few months." So much for the most dramatic and harrowing experience of her life. This, however, was not all reticence on her part. Episodes of her early life unconnected with Arthur failed to interest her. She does not even tell us that her adored father, Dr. Jefferies, committed suicide when she was thirteen.

All this devotion—more than devotion: this vicarious life—was poorly rewarded during Cynthia's first years with Arthur. I thought, and I was not alone in thinking it, that Arthur treated Cynthia abominably. She was on duty twenty-four hours a day. She never asked for

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any time off. Arthur requested absolute perfection in all departments. That she had to be a first-class secretary and administrator goes without saying. But if a dish did not come off successfully, Arthur's comments, though polite in tone, were scathing in content. When her cooking failed to improve to Arthur's complete satisfaction, Arthur sent her to cookery classes, but taking part in that arduous course did not mean that Cynthia was relieved from other duties.

In the 1970s a change came over their relationship. Cynthia became much more relaxed, started teasing Arthur and laughing at him, kindly and with affection, nevertheless in a manner she would not have dared a few years before. Arthur, having lost (because of drunken driving) and later having given up his driver's license, became more and more dependent on Cynthia. This increased Cynthia's confidence. At first Arthur would take a taxi now and then, and go on various errands of his own, but these occasions became rarer and rarer and then ceased altogether.

When Arthur was found to have Parkinson's disease in 1978, he became Cynthia's prisoner. When leukemia set in, the position became even worse. Cynthia, to be sure, was an understanding and gentle jailer. But Arthur—given to depression even at the happiest times of his life—nonetheless felt himself a prisoner. For once he did not rebel; he accepted his fate and became resigned to it. There was no bitterness in Arthur; he and Cynthia grew closer and closer to each other. But she was inevitably gaining the upper hand. In a sense Arthur had been beaten, and he knew it.

Yet all this made their relationship sweeter. They loved each other more than ever before. Arthur was deeply touched by Cynthia's total devotion and dedication, of which, in the end, she gave such dramatic and shattering proof. But Cynthia, too, was happy to live and die for Arthur. In a suicide note written in June 1982—eight months before their joint suicide—when he thought that Cynthia would survive him, Arthur concluded: "What makes it nevertheless hard to take this final step is the reflection of the pain it is bound to inflict to my few surviving friends, and above all my wife, Cynthia. It is to her that I owe the relative peace and happiness that I enjoyed in the last period of my life—and never before."

Eight months later, when it came to the final act, roles changed once again, most dramatically. In their last few years Arthur could not go out alone—neither out of their Knightsbridge house, nor of the Denston garden in Suffolk. And finally he could not get out alone from their entwined lives, which had truly become one single life.

Arthur's public persona consisted of three layers, or perhaps one could more accurately say that he was a Janus looking in three directions. There was Koestler the writer, the scientist, and, in the last decade or so, the man absorbed in parapsychology.

I only wish to say a few words about this trinity. To assess Arthur Koestler the writer would require a long, detailed essay. It is clear, though, that his *Darkness at Noon* is not only one of the great novels of this century but also, perhaps, the most influential one of all. That France did not go Communist after the last war is owing to various reasons, and high among them is *Le Zero et l'Infini*, published there immediately after the war. His *Sleepwalkers*, which recounts man's changing view of the universe, with its superb biographies of Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton, as well as his autobiographical volumes, *Arrow in the Blue* and *The Invisible Writing*, are major masterpieces that will survive. He deserved the Nobel Prize but never got it. He was said to be among the runners-up on three occasions.

Arthur's parapsychology bored me to tears. But, then, he was bored with my prosaic and commonplace mind. I could not take this interest of his seriously, but I must add one word of warning: he was no dreamy-eyed, naive believer in miracles and frauds. He hated the cheats, the swindlers, the fakes, and called a lot of what was going on "pornography." He wrote that in microphysics and macrophysics, when we get down to the particles of the atom or get out into space, our commonplace physical notions about time, mass, energy, and many other matters become irrelevant and nonsensical. He tried to establish a parallel: perhaps parapsychology belonged to a micro-macro world where our everyday rules did not work. There were a great many phenomena beyond our understanding and he longed to understand them, or some of them. His views, however, were not unbiased. Arthur *wanted* to believe in the supernatural, but his scientific outlook and

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logical mind prevented him from achieving this dream.

Finally, about Arthur's scientific work I am not competent to pass judgment. My academic qualification, such as it is, is a doctorate in law, and I know very little about the natural sciences. But today, of course, science is becoming more and more specialized. People know only small sections of their own subject. Scientists today cannot follow even their own limited field really extensively, so inundated are they with publications.

Doubtless various professors of biochemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, ecology, eugenics, etc., know much more of their respective sciences than Arthur did. But no professor of chemistry knew more of astronomy, no mathematician knew more of eugenics, no biologist knew more of physics than Arthur did. One may patronizingly dismiss him as a jack-of-all-trades and master of none. Most people accept the fact that science has become specialized and that's that. But it was exactly this that's that against which Arthur rebelled. He disliked the blinkers that so many scientists wear so proudly. He tried to abolish the rigid frontiers between sciences because he believed in seeing connections that the narrow specialists failed to notice. Intellectually, Koestler was the last of the Renaissance men, five hundred years after the Renaissance. He was a curious phenomenon in our age: he came too late—or perhaps too early.

Arthur was a superb organizer. He often remarked, with a rueful smile, that his ability as an organizer was a legacy of his Communist days. He did not always organize his life all that well, but he organized his death—his and Cynthia's death—to perfection.

He told me more than once that he was not afraid of being dead, but he was afraid of the process of dying. But he was afraid of something else even more: of botching a suicide attempt. To be brought back to life after a serious suicide attempt must indeed be terrible. To all the tragedy that made you commit suicide, humiliation is added. In his case there was an extra consideration: his scientific pride. If he mucked up such a serious scientific experiment, he could not survive. (The phrase that he could not survive survival looks, at first sight, singularly inept. It is not.)

On the morning of Tuesday, March 1, 1983, Cynthia took their old dog, David, to the vet in order that he should be put to sleep—to be killed, in more precise language. On the evening of the same day, Arthur and Cynthia killed themselves. On Wednesday, Miss Marino, their daily help, did not come, and that gave the poison more time to work effectively. When Miss Marino turned up on Thursday morning, she found a note. It was written by Cynthia and read: "Please do not go upstairs. Ring the police and tell them to come to the house."

Two detectives went to the house and entered the sitting room. There they were, sitting peacefully in their usual places, Arthur in the big armchair with his back to the balcony, and Cynthia on the sofa on his left. They had both been dead for about thirty-six hours.

In his suicide note of 1982 Arthur explained: "My reasons for deciding to put an end to my life are simple and compelling. Parkinson's Disease and a slow-killing variety of leukemia (CCL). I kept the latter a secret even from intimate friends to save them distress. After a more or less steady physical decline over the last years, the process has now reached an acute state with added complications which make it advisable to seek self-deliverance now, before I become incapable of making the necessary arrangements."

Arthur's last suicide note—the one actually found after their death—was not read at the inquest. Cynthia added one single sentence to Arthur's note, and this was made public: "I cannot face life without Arthur."

Arthur Koestler had divided feelings about life after death. He spoke of a "timid hope" of a depersonalized afterlife. He never expected to sit in Heaven enjoying blissful happiness, but he hoped, vaguely, that he might leave some trace of having lived—a sparkle on a river, a fragrance, or a light.

I know nothing of this sort of afterlife. I believe in one sort of limited immortality: to live on in people's hearts, memories, and gratitude. I am sure that Arthur Koestler, far from being just a modest, unpersonalized sparkle, will be a glowing light, shining through the twenty-first century and after.

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Rebecca West

The Art of Betrayal

RENEE WINEGARTEN

Even in her last years, when she had become the grande dame of English letters, Rebecca West still spoke with the eager voice of a young girl, full of excited curiosity. Her long life extended from the final decade of Queen Victoria's reign, through social upheavals, revolutions, and two world wars that destroyed European hegemony and undermined confidence in the values of Western civilization. She lived to see esteem for the written word replaced by the mindlessness and incoherence of so-called mass culture. Imbued with the lofty ideal of art proclaimed by Henry James, the subject of her first literary study, she met Hardy, Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and was one of the first to recognize the genius of D. H. Lawrence. She survived to worst Marshall McLuhan, then at the crest of the modish wave, in a dazzling defense of literature, her presidential address to the English Association in 1969.

At the core of all her varied work in different genres—social and political journalism, literary criticism, biography, stories, novels, and her great historico-cultural epic on Yugoslavia, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*—there was an immense desire for knowledge, a quest for understanding. For her, as for Fielding, art meant "discovery or finding out." Yet together with her openness and readiness to learn, there coexisted themes and attitudes that would remain constant. These enduring responses of hers were imposed by the extremely bitter experiences of her early life.

RENEE WINEGARTEN, essayist and literary critic, is the author of *Writers and Revolution* and *The Double Life of George Sand: Woman and Writer.*

The name she made famous was not, of course, her own. She was born Cicily Isabel Fairfield in London in 1892, the youngest of three sisters, and was largely educated in Edinburgh. Her father, gifted but unstable, came of Anglo-Irish stock. He left the army for journalism, where his brilliance was such that some even regarded him as George Bernard Shaw's equal in controversy. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Fairfield was an inveterate gambler, bent on self-destruction: money did not stay with him long. As for her mother, the daughter and sister of Scottish composers, she had given up the prospect of a professional career as a pianist when she married. Theirs was a cultivated home, where insistence on clear thinking and right judgment, as well as talk about politics, literature, painting, and music, prevailed.

Then Mr. Fairfield abandoned his wife and daughters, leaving them in straitened circumstances. He died alone in a Liverpool boardinghouse when Rebecca West was about ten years old. Mrs. Fairfield found work as a music governess, but her health broke down. The girl was deeply distressed by the changes that illness wrought in her mother, to whom she was devoted. Like her sisters, she herself contracted tuberculosis and continued to be vulnerable to sickness in later life.

"We never came across anybody who was as poor as we were," Rebecca West would write years afterward with pardonable exaggeration, for before 1914 there must have been many unfortunates even worse off than the Fairfields. Compared with the utterly downtrodden, though, mother and daughters had the expectations and tastes of the educated middle class without the wherewithal to pur-

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sue them. It was only natural that, as a teenage girl, Rebecca West should care that she had no decent clothes—hence the marked pleasure shown in dresses and hats in her later books. She had the pride and the sense of superiority imparted by the assumptions of talented parents, yet was obliged to suffer slights in Edwardian society where rank and money gave status. If the Fairfields did not fit into any recognizable slot, neither would Rebecca West as a writer. Already somewhat abrasive in character, with strong likes and dislikes, she acquired few friends at school.

Her father's rejection of the wife and children who loved him left a mark that could never be erased. Here was a betrayal of so large and ultimately so incomprehensible a nature that the recollection of it haunted her throughout her life. How to grasp what had happened? Much of her work would be engaged with the mutual incomprehension of intimates and with the mystery of betrayal in various guises, whether private and sexual or public and political.

So there existed men who could value ambition, power, a "cause," or, in some cases in her fiction, another "inferior" woman—anything, in short, rather than the truly devoted love they were offered. This devotion they chose to cast aside with humiliating indifference. To believe oneself loved and yet suddenly to be unfairly rejected and betrayed by the person one most admires and adores—what could be more wounding to the sensitive young psyche? And to this charming but self-centered man her beloved mother had sacrificed her own opportunity for self-fulfillment as an artist and had been forced into a life of penurious struggle. Rebecca West's dark view of the universe, which doubtless owes something to the ambience of Scottish-Augustinian Calvinism as well as to the current of Darwinian determinism, springs from this cruel initiation into life.

She had to earn a living, and at first she aimed at becoming an actress. At the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London she was soon given to understand that her gifts did not lie in that quarter, and her efforts on the stage met with no success (always a painful recollection, recreated in the young Cordelia's persevering but futile attempts to become a violinist, in the novel *The Fountain Overflows*). Instead, when eighteen years old, she tried her father's profession, journalism, submitting articles in 1911 to the newly founded feminist paper, *The Freewoman*. She took the apt pseudonym "Rebecca West," after the ambitious, emancipated heroine of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, a character then thought to be wildly daring. Her bold attack on the formidable anti-suffragist, Mrs. Humphry Ward, noted proponent of the Victorian concept of woman's self-sacrificing role (an aspect of Mrs. Fairfield's fate that her daughter particularly loathed), made the young journalist's reputation.

Rebecca West's debut and rise to fame coincided with the increasingly stormy militant agitation for women's suffrage in the years immediately before the First World War. Fueled by her mother's wrongs, she had been involved in the feminist movement at least since the age of fourteen and had performed various minor jobs (later given to Ellen Melville, the intelligent seventeen-year-old typist in the novel *The Judge*). She frequently met with hostility, and on one occasion when she addressed a meeting at Leith docks, a striker threw a herring at her.

While she admired the martyred heroines of the suffrage movement who went to prison and endured the cruelty of being forcibly fed, she herself tended to deplore violent militancy, preferring to fight with the pen, by means of hard reasoning, angry ridicule, and wit. She attacked poverty, injustice, and cant; spoiled, "parasite," well-to-do women as compared with their unfortunate sisters who deserved equal pay for equal work; and above all, "the impudence sex privilege may engender in the most insignificant male." For her, the prime sin of women was their readiness to surrender their personality. The vote was essential, but it was not enough.

Soon, she was claiming to be a socialist, following such nineteenth century predecessors as George Sand who expected socialism to solve the woman problem along with all the others. Though critical of the rising Labour party and of the insularity of the trade unions, young Rebecca West believed in "the magic of socialism," which, like so many writers, she mistakenly imagined would be good for art. Together with the ideal of emancipation went the dream of sexual freedom, then a subject of ardent discussion not only in the Bloomsbury circle but in the Fabian Society. Among the

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Fabians, as Beatrice Webb put it, H. G. Wells was irresponsibly "gambling with the idea of free love."

Rebecca West's spirited review of Wells's novel *Marriage* led to an invitation to his home in Essex. They were drawn to each other. At nineteen, with her fresh, dark good looks, she was eager for life and experience. H. G. Wells appeared then, at forty-six, the most controversial and exciting figure on the literary scene. He himself had struggled from deprivation to eminence. But behind the apparently respectable front of his second marriage, he was a determined womanizer. His liaison with Dorothy Richardson, who pioneered the "stream of consciousness" technique in reaction to Wells's "realist" method, had ended after she lost his child through miscarriage. Other women followed, and he was still enmeshed with Countess von Arnim when he decided to break off the association with Rebecca West. The girl was shattered. Reminded of her father's humiliating rejection, she wrote to Wells: "You can't conceive a person resenting the humiliation of an emotional failure so much that they twice tried to kill themselves." After these attempts at suicide, she said that "it would have been a miracle if they had succeeded, although I meant them to." She was not destined to follow her namesake into the millrace.

By the end of 1913 they were lovers: in conversation and correspondence she was rapturously Panther, he Jaguar. On the day war was declared in 1914, their son Anthony was born. This largely "back street" love affair had its disadvantages for the young woman who had idealized sexual freedom. There were long intervals of waiting for Wells's visits; lies to suspicious landladies; attempts at blackmail by servants who discovered the truth about "Mrs. West's" position—in short, a series of humiliations to counter her joy in his company. Nowhere would her feelings about unmarried motherhood be made more explicit than in her novel *The Judge*, where, forsaken and pregnant, Marion Yaverland is stoned through the village. Since Wells had no intention of leaving his wife, Rebecca West saw herself as the "sexual" woman who was being sacrificed to the "non-sexual" woman, a theme to which she often reverted. The idea of marriage itself she had excoriated in her rather overwrought short story "Indissoluble Matrimony," published in the first issue of the Vorticist magazine *Blast*.

To Rebecca West it seemed that men and women were ineluctably at war, in spite of mutual need. After a while, it became plain that she differed from Wells on the subject of art, which he was tending to subordinate increasingly to didactic ends. While she was at work on her study of Henry James, her companion was attacking James, the high priest of art, in his book entitled *Boon*. Her somewhat stilted first novel, *The Return of the Soldier* (1918)—in which three women confront the shell-shocked amnesiac soldier-hero, the best of them being one whose poverty has not destroyed her quiet goodness—doubtless owed less to Wells the writer than to James, D. H. Lawrence, and the distinguished novelist, still underrated today, Ford Madox Ford (whom she had met as one of the contributors to *Blast*). However, she allows her fictional lovers a Thames-side idyll of the kind she herself had enjoyed with Wells.

By the time Rebecca West eventually broke free from Wells, ten years had passed and she was thirty. Wells could be neglectful when she was ill, and, worse, he was unfaithful to her. When they were in Spain together in 1922, he made scenes in public, and she hated scenes (an echo of these dramas can be found in her novel *The Thinking Reed*, in the unpleasant conduct of the heroine's lover, André de Verviers).

Her misery can be deduced from that long cry of despair, *The Judge* (1922), with its dismal epigraph taken from the body of the work: "Every mother is a judge who sentences the children for the sins of the father." The book was dedicated to her mother, who died in 1920. Ellen, the attractive young protagonist of the early semi-autobiographical Edinburgh scenes, who witnesses her deserted mother's death, yields in the second part to the long-suffering Marion Yaverland, with whose illegitimate adventurer son, Richard, Ellen is in love. Marion's second and legitimate son, the luckless Roger, is the offspring of rape by a despised husband who had promised not to consummate the marriage. In an ending worthy of a Gothic novel, and very revealing of the author's state of mind, Marion commits suicide, Richard kills Roger, while Ellen prepares to have Richard's illegitimate

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child and thus repeat the gloomy pattern of modern womanhood. Over fifty years later, when Rebecca West, in her essay "And They All Lived Unhappily Ever After," criticized such novelists as Doris Lessing and Margaret Drabble for insisting on the sexual humiliation of women, she must have forgotten *The Judge,* her *roman à thèse.* Wells spoke of it as "an ill-conceived sprawl of a book with a faked hero and a faked climax," and it cannot be said that he was entirely wrong. Rebecca West was never at her most powerful in imaginative invention.

Ever since 1914, through an invitation from Walter Lippmann, she had been contributing to periodicals in the United States, where, in 1923, she made two separate lecture tours. She longed to begin a new life in New York, among such new friends as Fannie Hurst, Alexander Woollcott, and the F. Scott Fitzgeralds. But while her warmly sympathetic connection with the United States would endure, through lecturing and journalism, and would be mirrored (not always convincingly) in later short stories, such as "Life Sentence" and "There Is No Conversation," she could not feel quite at home. An affair with an American who was separated from his wife did not turn out happily.

In the mid-1920s, she spent her time in London, New York, and Paris, and her summers in Provence. The repercussions of the affair with Wells were still being felt. He made difficulties when she was advised to adopt their son Anthony, in order to elude showing the boy's birth certificate with its stigma of illegitimacy. All the same, through tough resilience and hard effort, she was succeeding in shaping an independent life: she could savor the pleasures of autumnal walks in Paris, "the best of all cities," and visits to her Parisian dressmaker and milliner; she could cultivate a taste for French cuisine as well as for Proust and Valéry. Art was important to her and, no less than love, enabled her to go on living, she proclaimed in the essays of *The Strange Necessity* (1928). There, she expressed her passion for life, but with surprise, "considering that life has treated me as all the children of man like a dog from the day I was born."

With her novel *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* (1929), she tried to lighten the tone of her writing. Its somewhat forced gaiety lies at the opposite extreme to the scarcely adulterated gloom of *The Judge.* There is something of Wells in the self-made shady politician Condorex, who betrays his better self by repeatedly rejecting his lover, the dazzling, sensuous pianist and white witch, Harriet, in order to further his career. Condorex and Harriet are seen as total opposites. Only after death is their mystical "real and infrangible union" consecrated in a fantastic denouement. The novel reflects the preciosity of the day, which really suited her very little.

After 1930, Rebecca West mellowed somewhat. In that year, the feminist critic of matrimony married the banker, Henry Maxwell Andrews. It has been said that he was dull and that they were ill-matched. But he had wide interests: he spoke German perfectly, having spent part of his boyhood in Hamburg; and he had studied philosophy at Oxford. They shared a country home in Buckinghamshire, and friends would later comment on her fine taste in furniture and pictures. By the end of the thirties she had traveled extensively, visiting nearly every country in Europe. Her novel, *The Thinking Reed* (1936), with its Pascalian title, was dedicated to her husband.

This novel is about the growth of understanding in a marriage, viewed against the background of the fashionable international set. The beautiful heroine, an American of French descent called Isabelle (after the author's second name), marries on the rebound an unprepossessing, good-hearted, wealthy French-Jewish industrialist. She craves "moral riches," and though not basically averse to the other kind, she despises most of the rich people among whom she now moves—a feeling all too clearly shared by the author, to the book's detriment. Isabelle's husband fails her by gambling (shades of Mr. Fairfield!) and by neglecting to come to her aid when she is having a miscarriage. Ultimately, they are reconciled when Isabelle realizes that she too has been at fault and has betrayed "the trust which is the real point of marriage." Their reunion, in its acknowledgment of moral as well as sexual compatibility, is very fine. Despite the feeling that the author is manipulating her characters at self-indulgent length, *The Thinking Reed* marks a considerable advance on Rebecca West's earlier fiction.

The early thirties also saw the publication

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of her biography of Saint Augustine. This work allowed her to portray a son's relationship with a dominant mother, a situation she knew at first hand through the bond with her son, Anthony, and the tensions that bond created. She also revealed there the enduring influence of her moralistic Scottish education, rooted in Augustinian Calvinism, as well as her reaction against it. She agreed with Saint Augustine: "If we examine ourselves carefully we cannot claim to have free will." To him she attributed that hateful preference for what is "disagreeable," that will to death (known to her when she tried to commit suicide), that doctrine of atonement through suffering which, she felt, had poisoned much of European culture. Without him and his commanding influence, she implies, Western civilization might have been much more life orientated—a rather dubious proposition. However, her book on the author of *The City of God* does give an intensive résumé of her world view.

A direct line runs from the ideas expressed in the biography of Saint Augustine to a major work published some nine years later, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1942). Subtitled *The Record of a Journey Through Yugoslavia in 1937*, these two mighty volumes offer far more than that: besides being an incomparable guide to the cities, churches, and landscape of Yugoslavia, they attempt to capture the soul of its people through its star-crossed history, its neglected art and literature, its fierce blood-stained political conflicts. They display a gift of empathy with a number of remarkable spirits, from the Serbian-Jewish poet whom she calls Constantine, to the ill-fated old Montenegrin woman who addressed the heavens with the unanswerable query: "If I had to live, why should my life have been like this?" Rebecca West has caught the ferment among South Slav intellectuals, the sense of life being consciously lived, as well as what she aptly designated the "lack of psychological staying-power." Perhaps in conception the work owes something to Havelock Ellis's *The Soul of Spain*, which she had reviewed and admired long before, but it is far richer than its predecessor. Forty years later, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* has lost none of its power or its importance. It is a book about life and about conflicting attitudes to living.

Rebecca West had first visited Yugoslavia in 1936 on a lecture tour (for which she was awarded the Order of Saint Sava) and had succumbed to its beauty. A year later, she returned with her husband, who receives a nice tribute on the last page of the book and who plays an important part in the narrative as loyal support. It is he, too, who states or confirms the author's opinions—for instance, in the long disquisition on "process"—or who is provoked into speaking his mind to Constantine's racialist German wife, Gerda (though we are left with the strong impression that in reality Rebecca West herself would have squashed the obnoxious woman). One of the book's many themes evokes the author's married contentment and suggests an ideal matrimonial partnership.

There is a tradition in English travel writing that exalts the merits of a foreign country in order to expose the deficiencies of British life and the shortcomings of doomed Western civilization in urgent need of replacement by something more "primitive" or "natural." Rebecca West does not follow that path. For her, the history of the South Slavs does not point to the end of Western civilization but rather to the ever-pressing need to defend it. The South Slavs bore the brunt of the battle and saved the rest of Europe from the blight of Turkish domination.

She was writing the book from 1938 onward, into the early precarious years of the Second World War, and it is naturally governed by her distaste for anti-Semitism (a distaste manifest in her youthful journalism) and her hatred of Nazism, shared by her husband who had bravely tried to help various liberals and Jews when visiting Germany on business. Her early socialism had been left behind, and in the book she repudiated pacifism, not least the leftist variety, speaking of the betrayal by "Left Wing people among whom I had lived all my life." She also rejected the Gandhian notion of passive resistance and any hint of appeasement. While she loathed war, in the past she had shown little sympathy for Siegfried Sassoon's anti-war poetry, rooted though it was in his terrible experiences in the trenches, because she valued great soldiers and the soldierly virtue of fortitude. The fact is that by nature she was a fighter.

For Rebecca West, man's nature is essentially evil: that is, symbolized by the grisly

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ritual sacrifice of the black lamb, the human urge to gain what it wants by shedding blood. But man is also secretly tempted to yield to his destroyer, in a kind of self-betrayal and moral suicide, by heeding the evil counsel of the grey falcon in the Slav epic poem. Both lamb and falcon stand for anti-life, the latter—despite sweet words—being just as inimical to human destiny as the former. For, as she urgently points out, there were certain disasters in history from which it was impossible ever to recover fully. The moral of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* was a moral for 1942, when her Yugoslav friends were dead or lay under the Nazi boot. Then the fate of Western democracy and freedom hung in the balance. It is no less a moral for today.

The war years were spent in Buckinghamshire, where she was "keeping an anxious eye" on her husband's farm. As soon as the war was over, Rebecca West consolidated her reputation as a journalist, writing on the Nuremberg trials and on notorious cases of lynching, murder, and espionage. She covered the trial of the traitor William Joyce and that of other wartime fascists—essays published as *The Meaning of Treason*, though the work scarcely lives up to the promise of its title, or succeeds in giving a satisfactory explanation for the enigma of betrayal she had always been seeking. Later, chapters were added on every notable spy from Fuchs to Blake and beyond, a comment on Anthony Blunt being added in 1981.

Rebecca West judged the traitors with a cold eye. She saw through the skillful ploys they used to justify themselves to loose-thinking intellectuals. On account of such traitors, she maintained, Anglo-American relations were damaged, the United States was detached from its Allies, the West lost most of its advantage and appeared "tarnished in its own eyes." She did not mince words: "A traitor is a thief and a liar." It has been said that she lacked compassion in her treatment of traitors, though it is not clear why she should be expected to be kindly to those who were trying to destroy a way of life that she and all decent people valued. Her postwar writings about political betrayal, the undermining of Western civilization and the need to defend it, lead forward from the wartime *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

Both of Rebecca West's major novels deal with different aspects of betrayal. In *The Fountain Overflows* (1957), a work of great charm and psychological penetration, she returns to the period of her early youth. All is seen through the eyes of her alter ego and narrator, Rose, a budding pianist. It is an intelligent girl's viewpoint, marvelously recaptured and at moments skillfully modified by the more sophisticated comments of the adult. Here is the brilliant, adored father, none too scrupulous about money, who grows estranged from his wife and children. He makes a noble effort to save the mother of Rose's schoolfriend from execution for murder, but Rose hears him tell an influential member of Parliament that he is prepared to go to prison in this cause. Her father seems totally oblivious of the effect such a gesture would have on his wife and family. This is the moment of betrayal that prepares for the ultimate betrayal of his departure. The courageous and loving mother, the warmth and poetry of family life despite financial hardship, the sensation of what it was like to live before the First World War when people still believed in progress, the successful musical debut of Rose and her sister—all these combine to add balm to what was once an aching wound.

Rebecca West's last novel, and her fictional masterpiece, *The Birds Fall Down* (1966), is constructed upon a series of interlocking ironies that arise from the corrupting effects of betrayal. The book was inspired by a true story she had heard from Ford Madox Ford's sister, who was married to David Soskice, a Russian revolutionary. Once again, the author reverts to the maturing intelligence of a spirited young girl at the beginning of the century.

This detached observer, Laura Rowan, daughter of an English member of Parliament and a Russian noblewoman, becomes ever more closely involved in the action. While she is accompanying her aged grandfather, Count Nikolai, disgraced and exiled former minister of the czar, on a train journey through northern France, a Russian terrorist suddenly intrudes. He reveals to the ex-minister the treachery of the man who is at once his own leader and friend as well as the count's most trusted adviser. Laura is left alone to face her grandfather's collapse and death in a French provincial town and to tremble for her own

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life because she now knows too much. When her father does finally arrive from England, he displays insensibility and indifference to Laura's plight, being completely rapt in his affair with his wife's best friend. This is the great private betrayal and rejection. The political betrayal reaches an exciting climax with an assassination in a Paris street. Even Laura herself cannot escape untouched.

In *The Birds Fall Down*, the central figure of the double traitor, based on the astounding Russian terrorist-cum-police agent, Azev, is seen as one who wished to be both Christ and Judas. In her early journalism, Rebecca West had shown no little hostility to religion. Meanwhile, love of Yugoslavia had given her deep sympathy for the Orthodox church. By the time she delivered the lectures at Yale, published as *The Court and the Castle*, she had come to feel that the loftiest literature was concerned with power and with religion. Her last novel would indicate that she was trying to convey her long-felt distrust of the exercise of worldly power (in her view, no less dangerous than the spiritual neglect of power) and her fascination with the Russian Orthodox faith.

Still, unlike Dostoevsky who could discuss Russian terrorists on a metaphysical plane, she was not a member of that church and so, in the book, religion seems superimposed. Beneath the vision of a better future—lyrically expressed by Laura's mother as she decides to return to Russia with the girl, just as Lenin is gathering strength on the horizon—lies the skeptical, sardonic irony of an author who had lived in so changeable and perilous a jungle. The tone is quite different from that of Natalie Haldin's prayerful vision in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes:* "Revolutionist and reactionary, . . . betrayer and betrayed, they shall all be pitied together when the light breaks on our black sky at last." Conrad lifts the antagonists onto a higher level. Rebecca West could not do that. She did not seek to pass beyond good and evil. Nor did she ever try to elude a moral difficulty in the current manner, by indulging in talk of moral ambivalence.

Rebecca West asked all the big questions, but neither in ideas nor in art was she an innovator. An outstanding journalist, in her literary judgments she could at times rashly sacrifice a masterly oeuvre to a witty word. So far, Rebecca West has received comparatively little attention in general evaluations of modern literature, though both *The Fountain Overflows* and *The Birds Fall Down* should rank among the most distinguished traditional English novels of the last thirty years, along with the best of Paul Scott or Olivia Manning. Somehow, though, to call her a novelist does not seem quite enough. For she was also an independent, provocative moralist, the potent chronicler of the modern depreciation of the values of trust and loyalty, an eternal student of the subtle workings of evil in our times.

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TEACHING

R. S. Crane

ELDER OLSON

One afternoon in 1933 I sat with some thirty other students in a classroom of the classics building at the University of Chicago, awaiting the arrival of a professor named Ronald Salmon Crane. The course was English 303, a survey of English literature from 1660 to 1800. All of us had taken some survey courses and knew what to expect. There would be names, dates, bibliographies, short biographies of the major figures, assessments of their work, occasional excerpts for illustration. It would be the sort of thing one could get—minus a human presence, some bursts of eloquence, and perhaps some mild academic humor—from a college outline; the sort of thing that would permit a student who had digested the matter and done the required reading to say afterward, "I've got that period cold." In short, it would be not too unlike Kant's definition of a lecture as a process by which the notes of the professor become the notes of the student without passing through the head of either.

Precisely at 3:30 a man entered the room. He was in his late forties, a little under medium height, and dressed in a neat gray suit. He walked rapidly to the professorial table, glanced at the class through his spectacles, nodded, and sat down. There was nothing in his modest bearing and mild manner to suggest that, for some of us at least, this might be one of the more important moments of our lives. Nor was there any such suggestion in his opening words about the bare mechanics of the course: it was to be a lecture course; there were to be three short papers, each typed, single-spaced, on both sides of *one and one sheet only* (this, he explained, to ensure concision); there would be a final exam. Then the lecture proper began.

I can still see him very clearly, sitting in a shaft of that long-ago sun, and suddenly the man himself is vividly present to me. And I realize the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of the task I have undertaken. For I do not wish to offer one more eulogy, but to state the facts—to make a just portrait ("just" was one of his favorite words)—although the mere facts may indeed constitute a eulogy. Yet is it possible to see, unclouded by emotion, the facts about someone who was my revered professor, eventually one of my three closest friends, my colleague, and, at his wish, my officemate until his retirement? Or is emotion itself part of the fact?

There were several extremely able, even very eminent, scholars in the department of English at the University of Chicago at that time; but Crane stood in sharp contrast to all of them. He presented, not a mass of facts in topical or chronological succession, but a narrative—and more important, not mere narrative but inquiry into the construction of his narrative, questioning explictly or implicitly as he proceeded. What was a "fact"? When did a fact become evidence? What were the demands of evidence? What were the kinds of evidence? What determined relevance? What were the assumptions underlying an account? Could the same fact be used to prove opposite positions, and, if so, how? What was required of a historical statement or narrative? How many kinds of history were there? How many kinds of historical statements? What was probability as opposed to certainty, and how did one evaluate probability? What was a hypothesis? How could it be tested? How could one evaluate alternative hypotheses? What were legitimate and illicit uses of hypotheses? To cut this list almost brutally short, we were

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given not merely the results of scholarship but insights into what underlay it, into the sophisticated mechanisms at its foundation, so that we were first forced to worry about it and then subtly and gradually equipped to do it. In all this he must have resembled somewhat his professor in medieval history at the University of Michigan, Earle Wilbur Dow, whom he mentions with such respect in his preface to *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*. Crane did these things in English 303 on a simple level—but simple only as compared with what he did in his more advanced courses.

This is not to suggest that English 303 consisted chiefly of such questions as I have enumerated. On the contrary, they were a mere accompaniment to a vast history of British and international politics and diplomacy, court intrigues, the rise of certain sciences (the Royal Society, etc.) and the attitudes toward them, the current philosophies and the fortunes of others, contemporary religions, religious disputes, religious figures, and much besides—all, of course, as reflected in or as affecting the whole literature of the period. Everyone was pleased with the course, except the teacher. He told me later that he was dissatisfied with it because he thought it dealt with externals, not internals (by which he meant that it did not really deal with literary forms themselves). At that time, he felt, he had no sure instruments of analysis to treat forms as opposed to conventions, and thus he was not truly offering a history of any of the literary arts per se. His feeling may in part explain the transformation of a literary historian into a formal critic—a transformation that astounded many and caused some historians to mutter about "treason."

My first seminar with him was on William Collins and Thomas Gray. The concept behind all his seminars was the same: he thought of a seminar as a course in which the questions pursued were ones to which the professor himself did not know the answers. Other than guiding discussion, he took the role only of a more experienced and skillful collaborator. His earlier seminars, however, differed in format from his later ones. The Collins-Gray seminar, after a preliminary lecture in which he laid out what we were to do and what he would do, consisted entirely of class discussion. We were to write the famous one-sheet papers, write a term paper that substituted for a final exam, and, of course, read a lot; he was to be concerned with the poems in themselves. The phrase "poems in themselves" has meant many things in our time, chiefly the ignoring of, or even being ignorant of, historical, bibliographical, and other matters. The student who supposed Crane to mean *that* was courting disaster.

What Crane meant was that he had observed a tremendous gap in humanistic education, which was evident in the inability of students to discuss "an imaginative work in terms appropriate to its nature," as he says in "History Versus Criticism in the Study of Literature," an essay that he was writing during that very quarter. That gap he proposed to fill; what is more, he proposed to reform humanistic education itself. Exactly how to do this, he was by no means sure; admittedly he was groping and searching. Crane has sometimes been accused of being doctrinaire, but anyone who had seen the diffidence with which he felt his way through an unknown terrain—looking for a firm foothold, trying and testing at every step—would have been compelled to the opposite view.

In his progress he distrusted all the conventional maps, guidebooks, handrails; if he was to explore, he had to seek out every possible path. Consequently he was willing to consider any opinion, so long as it was not one of the outworn formulas. In my case alone, there were many instances in which almost any other professor would have seen to it that I was suppressed at once, like the guinea pig in *Alice;* but Crane heard me out. For example, I criticized two sacred cows—"Ode to Evening" and "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"—arguing that both went beyond their proper limits in that both shifted the object of emotion without due cause. I argued that the former should have ended with "The gradual dusky veil" and the latter with "the noiseless tenor of their way." As they stood, the one degenerated into abstraction and nonsense, the other into abstraction, clichés, faulty syntax, and maudlin self-pity. Knowing Crane's formidable reputation and his admiration for Johnson (who had most esteemed the lines I had just cut from the "Elegy"), I fully expected to have my head torn off—at least that had been my usual fortune with other professors. Crane, on the contrary, listened

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very carefully, even when I went on to say that the remainder of both poems badly damaged the intended effect; he asked a question or two; then he sat back and said thoughtfully, "You know, I believe you're right." His breadth of mind was reflected in the latitude he allowed us in our written work: our papers could be on anything we chose, provided that they were relevant to the poetic problems under consideration in the course. Thus my own term paper was on neither Collins nor Gray, but on the prosody of the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*.

I was greatly attracted to Crane; to explain why, I must intrude upon his portrait. For some years before I encountered him, I had realized that whatever other ambitions I had, I was compelled to be a poet. I had left the University of Chicago after my second year because, despite the many and strong attractions it had for me, I felt that little if anything of what I was offered had really to do with the essence of the art or, rather, arts that I was doomed to practice. That essence I had to understand. I knew from my musical training that however overwhelming the performance of a great musician, the effects were those of certain things done, as surely as I knew that in some chromatic passages of Chopin a very delicate portamento could be achieved by trailing the fifth finger. Technique, though only an instrument, always underlay every performance. I was convinced that this was true of poetry as well. I knew from my own experience in composition that there were many kinds of lyric poetry, each presenting its specific problems as well as problems unique to each poem—problems that had to have practical solutions if a poem was to ensue. But where was there any treatment of such matters?

I ransacked literary criticism without much success. I knew personally by this time a good number of poets and critics, but these, almost without exception, were either mystical about or indifferent to such questions; some were frankly superstitious about them, even fearful of or hostile to any inquiry into them. And I was not to be put off by such professorial evasions as "Ah, but that is precisely the genius of Shelley!" or "Ah, but that is the *magic* of Shakespeare!" *Magic*, indeed! Unless you believe in the supernatural, all magic is worked by human beings doing certain things that then have their natural effects. To such responses I found it hard, more frequently impossible, to be polite. I fear that some of my professors found me more difficult than I found their courses.

I had re-entered the University of Chicago after a four-year absence, partly at the urging of Bernard Weinberg, partly at the even more persuasive urging of Thornton Wilder. Wilder, who knew my poems and foresaw my fate even better than I did, argued that, since no poet nowadays can support himself by his poetry alone, and since teaching was the occupation which might permit the most leisure, I should obtain my bachelor's and master's degrees and find a post in some small college. I went back and took some courses with no other idea in mind than to carry out the rest of the plan. But even in the courses I took with Wilder, who was then teaching at Chicago, I found little that pertained to what I wanted most to know.

And then I encountered Crane.

Here was a man of immense erudition—an erudition that was not the mere passive effect of extensive reading but the result of intense study coupled with a constantly active critical intelligence. In my very first course under him, I found someone who strained my capacities. More than that, he made me realize that I had capacities I had not guessed; more even than that, he made it plain to me that I was going to have to develop yet other capacities. Here also, as I was to discover, was a man who was worrying about the same problems that were worrying me and who felt, as I did, that there were serious omissions in education; that criticism should be made into and recognized as an academic discipline; that, with the exception of some monographs, literary history was not really history (not even the sacrosanct *Cambridge History of English Literature*); that the theory of both literary history and history in general must be more closely looked into; and that the present condition of critical theory was deplorable—a situation in which most of what was pressed upon us as riches was either counterfeit or the currency of some inaccessible, perhaps mythical, foreign realm: witches' money, apparent gold that changed to dead leaves in our wallets.

We shared, too, certain objects of distrust or contempt: *Geistesgeschichte*, the "spirit of the age"; spurious, if conventionally ac-

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cepted, formulas; such nonsensical classifications as "Classical" or "Romantic" (after all, Goethe, who had invented the distinction simply to differentiate his own poetry from Schiller's, had in later years complained that he no longer understood what such terms had come to mean); merely thematic studies such as "The Sailor in Eighteenth Century Literature"; pseudocriteria like "sincerity" as applied to a lyric; the idea of a work as "definitive" (Crane thought scholarship, as I did, a perpetually ongoing process); the confusion of historical with artistic importance; and the citation of unexamined authority. "There is no authority but evidence," he said. To show our closeness of thought, I had long maintained that authority was not a man but a proof.

His later seminars, as I have said, differed from the earlier in format. In the opening session Crane would assign each student the writing of a paper that was to be read before the class on a given day and to take not less than a half hour in the reading. Another student was designated as critic of the paper. Each paper had to be typed with two carbons, one of which was to be delivered to Crane, the other to the critic one week in advance of the reading. After the author and critic had spoken and had been given a chance at counterargument, the class would discuss both. Finally, Crane would criticize the entire proceeding and, as one student put it, "clean up on all of us." Crane called this "the French system." Such a system would work, obviously, only with superior students, but these were never lacking. The format may sound innocuous enough, but discussion, with every student on his mettle, sometimes became very vehement.

Crane's *Tom Jones* seminar, the first of many on that work, employed the French system, and here discussion often reached white heat. One incident may show that I do not exaggerate. To a student's question Crane had replied that the Man of the Hill episode in *Tom Jones* was simply another interpolated tale in imitation of Cervantes. I took exception to this, contending that, on the contrary, it was a crucial point in the plot—in fact, a turning point in Tom's career. It may have been that my manner was unintentionally offensive, but Crane became extremely irritated, quite uncharacteristically, and made a remark about me to the class that I could take only as an uncalled-for and unforgivable insult. I was so furious that it was difficult for me to remain in the room.

Sensing my anger, Crane waited for me after class and asked me to walk home with him. I complied, and when, after walking several blocks in dead (and deadly) silence, I could finally bring myself to speak, I told him curtly that I was dropping the course and would work with him no longer. Crane did not apologize, but somehow calmed my wrath by questioning me about my view, until he had persuaded me to continue and to write my term paper on the subject. I did just that, and although, in contrast to his custom, he said nothing about it other than it was accepted, I have noted that he adopted my view. I still have the paper in my files. I have not told anyone about this incident before; perhaps it reveals more than I am aware about both of us. But this was only the first of many stormy clashes, none of which ever had the faintest effect upon our relationship.

The "Neo-Aristotelian movement," as our friend Kenneth Burke dubbed it, or the "Chicago School," as it has also been called, has been primarily associated with Crane, and justly so. Whether Crane was, in fact, its founder is difficult to say; but there is no question that he was a leader in it and that it would not have existed without him. The difficulty is that in the first place it was neither a movement nor a school, in the sense of a number of people holding uniform doctrines or even identical views about Aristotle, and that in the second place it was—whatever else it was—the consequence of many converging influences, without which it would not have existed. At the time of the Collins-Gray seminar, for instance, Crane was much impressed with Mortimer Adler. Adler was a strong advocate of Aristotle—I suspect in the Jesuitic tradition of interpretation, or at least with a heavy flavoring of Aquinas, Maritain, and Josephus Gredt—and he held that, whatever errors of fact or conjecture might be found in Aristotle, the Aristotelian *method* remained unassailable and permanently useful. I do not know whether it was Adler who suggested to Crane the possible use of the *Poetics* as an instrument in literary criticism, particularly formal criticism; but Crane told me that he had set up a discussion group at his home with

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Adler and other faculty members, with the purpose of studying that work, and that Richard McKeon had astounded them all with a brilliant analysis of the opening paragraph. At any rate, the influence of McKeon quickly superseded any that Adler may have had upon Crane.

All of us were influenced by McKeon, Rea Keast and I especially, since we were his students—I most of all, I think, for I took more courses under him and may even have conversed with him more often, on technical matters at least, for we formed the habit of taking long, late nocturnal walks together. It is impossible that any who recognized his prodigious learning, his greatness as a teacher and lecturer, and his profound philosophic genius should not have been influenced by him. You do not walk away unimpressed after being struck by lightning, and we were all struck repeatedly. Yet influence must not be taken to mean producing similarity. Though certainly McKeon provided the philosophic foundations for much of our work, he had his own labors and to my knowledge never published anything that could be taken as a formulation of the poetics of the Chicago School. I never studied the *Poetics* with him, though I read a great deal of Aristotle under his tuition, and to this day I have only a general conception of how he might analyze the work and no idea at all whether he would approve or disapprove of my own analysis of it. In conversation about it he would offer only somewhat cryptic hints.

I am sure that Richard McKeon approved of some of our efforts, and I am equally sure that he disapproved of others. But there was no such unanimity of the Chicago School as its critics and commentators have supposed. For example, I am told that McKeon has repeatedly denied my distinction between mimetic and didactic poetry—a distinction absolutely fundamental to some of my later theories—and certainly there must have been many other points on which he would have disagreed with me. While Crane accepted that distinction, I doubt that the terms meant for him what they mean for me. I, in turn, sharply disagreed with Crane's interpretation of mythos or plot. I do not think that any of us should be held responsible for the views of the others, however much we may have influenced each other. We were no more unanimous in our views than we were exclusively Aristotelian, for we were unanimous only in our view that Aristotle—in our interpretations of him—had certainly offered one of many possible methods of criticism. In truth, in our discussions I often wondered whether—to borrow Saintsbury's borrowing of Langland—there was any other such "fair field of *fighting* folk."

Nor could it have been otherwise. Friends though we were, we were all strongly individual, markedly different in temperament, talent, and—except for certain areas—interests. What we had in common, besides friendship, was a concern with certain problems and a general agreement about methods we might use to solve them. But if there was any other unity of the Chicago School, it was the unity of a log fire in which, by their proximity, the logs stimulate and inflame one another, while each burns with its individual fires.

Robert Maynard Hutchins, too, had a great influence on Crane, though Crane, always his own man, adopted only such ideas of Hutchins as he deemed useful. Hutchins's main interest was in general education; Crane's in humanistic studies. The extent of their agreement and disagreement may be seen by comparing Hutchins's proposals for education with the program of the department of English that Crane established when he became chairman. Crane's program was based on the four disciplines of linguistics, history (both, however, as ancillary to literary study), intellectual analysis (the analysis of argument in philosophical, rhetorical, and other texts), and criticism (the study of "imaginative literature" as such). Hutchins always thought in terms of educating a chiefly nonacademic public; I think Crane saw general education as preparation for graduate study, for the training of scholars and teachers. Hutchins's Great Books program, as opposed to Crane's English program, should clearly mark the difference between them. Besides Hutchins, there were many others who influenced Crane, as he freely acknowledged; for instance, his colleagues, the economist Jacob Viner and the historian Quincy Wright.

As a man—and the man always underlies the teacher—Crane was a warm, tolerant, solicitous, and steadfast friend and a genial and stimulating companion. He more than compensated for any small faults he may have had

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by an abundance of important virtues. Like Socrates, he was "willing to take the truth from oak or rock," but he always examined it carefully to be sure that it *was* the truth. If his interests were limited, it was no doubt because of his intense and constant passion for his real concerns. He seemed to have no great interest in music or in any of the arts beyond the literary, although he was well versed in the fine arts of the eighteenth century. He did not often go to concerts or art galleries; when I played records of dazzling performances for him, he would listen politely and patiently, appearing to sympathize with, rather than to share, my enthusiasm. Beyond literature and university affairs, his great interests were in national politics and international developments. Naturally, as a historian, he watched with particular anxiety the events before, during, and immediately following World War II. His own political beliefs tended toward the liberal, though they were judiciously tempered; he had a horror of both fascism and communism as extreme and oppressive, and great admiration for Roosevelt and Churchill as statesmen and orators.

As a teacher, Ronald Crane was extremely demanding—demanding because he felt that scholarship was demanding. He made no effort to entertain his students with jokes, personal anecdotes, and similar devices. If his erudition was, as I said, awesome, it was not used for display. Like his eloquence (and he could be very eloquent), it was manifest only when it was required. This refusal to display for the sake of display was common among the more distinguished professors at the University of Chicago, but I first noticed it in Crane. He cared only about what students might be taught, not about how he could impress them. He did not put on professorial dignity, for dignity was natural to him. His presentations were so precise and compact that it was perhaps impossible to summarize them or to put them in other words. One came away from his classes invariably with a sense of the terrific labors that he must have put into them.

"Occupation likely to afford most leisure," indeed! Most of the *waking* hours of a true professor are *working* hours—something that nonacademics can hardly comprehend. Why Wilder should have said such a thing I cannot imagine, for he was himself a fine scholar and excellent teacher and, writer though he was, never permitted his writing to interfere with his academic duties.

Crane's classroom manner was brisk, businesslike, and composed. Such was his composure that I was surprised, after he had invited me to share his office, to discover that he was often tense, impatient, even somewhat agitated before a class. It was not stage fright; it was partly the revving up that is natural before any performance, but chiefly anxiety lest he should fail to present his subject fully and clearly. In class he treated all students alike; while undoubtedly he must have had favorite students, he never exhibited any kind of favoritism. If there was any sign of his favor, it was that, as he told me, he tended to be most exacting with the best. I never saw him (nor did I ever see any good professor) come out of a class glowing with self-satisfaction; however enthusiastic the response, he was always more or less unhappy with what he had done. In class lectures he used notes typed on 8½-by-11-inch paper, folded in half and arranged into little booklets, but he hardly glanced at them. In seminars he made careful notes on the discussion. His public lectures were from complete texts and could have been printed as they stood.

His published works were, for the most part, addressed to serious students and were in no case intended for any who read as they run. Very hard work went into them, and it is sometimes hard work to comprehend them fully, for they require close and alert attention. In consequence they have been often gravely misinterpreted. A muddle-minded or wrongheaded interpretation of them disturbed him, chiefly because he feared that he had failed in the expression of his thought. "What did I say that could possibly be taken to mean *that?*" he would ask. The difficulty was that he had assumed his readers had erudition and intelligence equal to his own. I used to remind him that while an author may use every device to make himself clear, there are no devices to prevent his being *misread.*

Although his courses offered much for the development of critical and scholarly skills, their principal attractions probably were the ideas that he disseminated, for Crane was preeminently a man of ideas. I do not think I can justly claim for him that he was a great originator of ideas. Original he was, and

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greatly so; but his genius lay rather in finding new uses for ideas, arranging ideas into new significances, and keenly seeing consequences, objections, and further problems. In such matters few could match him. Those who could appreciate him found new areas opened up, new interests cultivated, new capacities developed, new equipment provided. The least any student could carry away from him was a sense of the enormous, endless responsibilities of scholarship and teaching. A good teacher teaches knowledge and skills. An excellent teacher does this superbly. A great teacher does this and more: he *changes lives* for the better. Ronald Crane changed my life so, and the lives of innumerable others.

St. Anne's—Moscow

SANDRA LAKE MILLER

Near Red Square, St. Anne's Church is on the grounds of the Hotel Rossia. The fifteenth century structure, of the same age as the Kremlin walls, is now a storage shed.

"The interior is not restored and closed," the peeling sign says.
But St. Anne's stands small and open to the sun, if not the faith.
Litter and little birds roost in quiet corners
in the shade of the Hotel Rossia
somehow dwarfed
by the delicacy of this old facade
tucked away like a footnote
at the bottom of some dull page
of ecclesiastical history.
You can find God in a godless land, but He may be closed.
It takes searching.
Look in corners and spare places
where care dwells and small birds fly up.

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The Aesthetics of the Criminous

JACQUES BARZUN

Raymond Chandler was a great literary critic, as anyone who reads his magnificent letters will readily admit. It is therefore to the letters that we must turn in order to find out his "considered views" on the part of literature properly called crime fiction. In addition to the letters, we are fortunate enough to have a paper of some thirty-five hundred words, written in 1949 and entitled by his editor: "Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel." These are so far from casual that we may call them the most searching and consecutive thoughts on the subject that any practitioner of the genre has left us. In that memorandum we may question some of the judgments of particular authors and stories, but the principles, once stated, seem virtually self-evident.

What are these principles? One is that good crime fiction must have most, if not all, of the qualities of literature. There must be a good story, full of dash and suspense; details and characters must seem real; the author must be honest throughout; and the reasonably bright reader, who is to be kept guessing all the way, must be given a clear and satisfying explanation at the end. You may say there is nothing very startling in these ideas, except perhaps the claim of literary merit. But in fact, if we scan the entire output in the genre since Edgar Allan Poe, we see that only those works which answer to Chandler's specifications survive as readable and thereby establish the claim.

Nor is this all. Chandler makes three other important points: the perfect mystery story can never be written, because the genre itself demands an impossible feat—that of first misrepresenting certain facts in order to present them again truly, yet without letting the reader feel cheated and disgusted. Therefore one or another element of good fiction must be sacrificed, usually some explicitness of character or event. It follows—this is the second point—that crime fiction partakes of fantasy. Lastly, the plausibility of any such story is (in Chandler's words) "largely a matter of style . . . a matter of effect, not of fact."

These conclusions—this aesthetics of the criminous, if one may put it so—are buttressed and justified by Chandler's obiter dicta in the letters, whether about his own works or those of others. Anyone who comes to these comments with the accepted idea that Chandler lifted the detective story from silly make-believe to stern realism will be shocked to find—among other surprises—that Chandler was a great admirer of the works of R. Austin Freeman, his predecessor by thirty years. Freeman seemed to him a first-rate contriver of plots and sustainer of suspense, superior in the handling of detail, and even enjoyable in his depiction of human affairs, including the love interest. So: Philip Marlowe, wipe that contemptuous look off your face as you shake hands with Dr. Thorndyke, and don't talk to him in the slang of L.A.'s back alleys.

Chandler is in truth a very catholic appreciator. For example, in spite of his ruling out the detective as a possible culprit, he finds acceptable Agatha Christie's *Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, because of the adept handling of the characterization and of the trick itself. Being naturally astute, Chandler was surprised that readers of his works did not notice the large element of burlesque they contain. He informs us that his long short-story "Pearls Are a Nuisance" was written and intended as a

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parody—"kidding the pants off" (his words) the tough genre. He tells his correspondents that what mattered most to him in his writing was the perfecting of a style, and he points out that in the early works he overdid the trick of unexpected similes. The challenge of producing crime fiction consisted for him of the need to write in such a way as to hold the interest of the half-educated while tickling the fancy of the intellectual. Except for one strong conviction that I shall shortly speak of, he felt detached from everything but questions of style. He had no wish to create memorable scenes or characters. It was by the accident of residence and employment that he invented the southern California which, in others' hands, was to prove so fruitful of gun-and-sex play and gilded turpitude. But on these same themes Chandler did mean to write better than Dashiell Hammett—and he did.

A very likely reason for this toplofty attitude is that Chandler was a widely read and highly educated man—a classicist as fervent as Dorothy Sayers and a judge of the craft of fiction as rigorous as Somerset Maugham or V. S. Pritchett. He confides to a friend that if writing essays paid as well as fiction, he would be an essayist exclusively; or again, in fiction, leaving crime, he would like to do nothing but write fantasies; and he jotted down a few plots. If we turn back to his beginnings as a writer in London, we find Chandler bent on being a poet and critic. He occasionally wrote poems later, but doubtless owing to the conditions of literature in this country and the tempting proximity of Hollywood, Chandler never became an American C. Day-Lewis doubling as Nicholas Blake.

As a result, Chandler was beset by a sense of wrong, which is not quite a sense of failure; for he was, after all, a manifest success. But he did not relish its kind—popular novelist and Hollywood adapter. Coming on top of the disillusionment common to those who survived the trenches of the First World War, this sense of wrong developed into a contempt for society. It pervades both Chandler's fiction and his letters, and it animates the conviction I mentioned as dominant in his soul: society, mankind, is corrupt—all but a few scattered individuals. Poor and proud, this small remnant possess integrity and deserve respect, because they have no other ambition but to be pure. Their lives are a mute reproach to the rich and successful, who are not only self-indulgent but also heartless.

What I outline here might be called Chandler's job description for Philip Marlowe. The very verb *must* that Chandler uses in "The Simple Art of Murder" shows that I am not exaggerating: "He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be the best man in his world . . . a relatively poor man . . . a lonely man . . . and you will treat him as a proud man or be very sorry you ever saw him." This character obviously projects Chandler's fantasy of himself. Resentment is its mood, justified by everything done and said in his surroundings. In short, the tough is tough because he is so terribly tender.

This one-against-the-wicked-world enterprise has a long literary tradition. It dates back to the picaresque novel and the heroes of Defoe, Balzac, and Byron, not to mention Robin Hood in the folk legend. But before Chandler the type was always an outlaw or close to it. On this model were enacted in real life the crimes of Lacenaire, whose memoirs show how a wounded spirit at the beginning of the nineteenth century came to see the whole world as more vile than the ostensible criminal.

These earlier heroes reveled in their adventures. Their gloom was zestful. It was left to Chandler and the twentieth century to turn the battling mood sentimental and self-pitying by replacing the outlaw with a law-abiding detective and substituting contempt for hatred, dreary thoughts for fierce joy, and one shabby suit for the stylish cloak of dark material.

One may suppose that what helped to change the symbolic figure was the rise and popularization of all the critiques of society, from the novel to sociology and from Freud to Communism. Whereas earlier the preacher castigated the individual sin, now the thinkers denounce "the system," with the result that an individual's sense of wrong logically leads him to blame the organization of life itself.

Pushing this speculation further, I am inclined to think that when Chandler in the famous essay attacked A. A. Milne's *Red House Mystery* for its lack of realism and made it represent all the errors of crime fiction up to that date, the true ground of the onslaught was the kind of life that the Red

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House people enjoyed: wealth, servants, good clothes, good food, manners, elegance of speech, and the ability to indulge frivolous tastes without any visible labor for the benefit of mankind, without any thought about its mode of existence. Now one might agree that this sort of life should be reformed, or even abolished, but that is a matter for political science, not for literary criticism. If the Red House is recognizable and typical of its kind and the kind exists, then it can legitimately serve as setting for a story. The reality of a dingy poolroom in the slums of Los Angeles is not more real, it is *also* real. If, finally, the events said to take place at the Red House do not conform to the rules and habits of the Sussex County police, we remind Chandler of his critical dictum: "Plausibility is a matter of style, of effect, not of fact."

We can even twist the knife half a turn more: having admitted that the crime-fiction genre belongs to the realm of fantasy, Chandler should have been ready to accept fantasies other than his own brand—and in fact he does. His judgments of contemporary writers are hospitable and sound—except when the characters to be admired are well-to-do and lead a life of elegance. The social gospel possessed his mind: only the poor could get into the kingdom of heaven.

One cannot help inferring that Chandler's critical poise was disturbed by his failure to distinguish between a novel, which has the duty to pass judgment on character and society, and a tale, which amply fulfills its promise when it offers glancing reflections from any facet of life. In a tale, characterization need not—often should not—go into the depths. The great art of the tale is in fact to characterize the *role*—tinker, tailor, merchant, thief—sacrificing individuality to liveliness and amusement. Chandler, after all, understood this perfectly well. His Marlowe is not a person ("he grew out of the pulps"), and when Howard Haycraft apparently demurred at the thesis of "The Simple Art of Murder," Chandler replied: "You must not take a polemic piece too literally. . . . All polemic writing is overstated. . . . I could have written a piece of propaganda in favour of the English detective story just as easily." To these words I need only add: Q.E.D.

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The Ducks

GREG MOSS

There they all were, the ducks
With their dirty pointed rumps,
Taking a swim or a walk
Along the rim of the
Park pond so ungracefully,
But acting, nevertheless,
As if we owed it to
Them to toss bread crumbs upon
The soupy green water
Or on the brown lawn where they
Shook themselves and squatted,
Quacking furiously, angrily
At the one who got the
Bread while we threw them more
And more until nothing
Remained in our cellophane
Bags to throw. They looked up
And got the message, the
Message that we had nothing
Left to give beyond our
Own human countenances
Clothed as they were in our
Winter jackets, destitute
Of any further importance
That could possibly interest
Them, looked up and then with
Perfect slow disgust, grunted
Their way back out into
The preferred distances of the
Murky water as if to say
That being human guarantees
Nothing in itself, even less than
Nothing without at least
One stale crumb in
The human hand that holds it.

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The Gospel According to Ludwig

ERNEST GELLNER

WITTGENSTEIN ON RULES AND PRIVATE LANGUAGE. *By Saul A. Kripke. Harvard University Press. $12.50.*

For better or for worse, Wittgenstein may well be the most influential single philosopher of the century. Saul Kripke's work is preceded (rather than followed) by a great reputation for precocity, technical virtuosity, and occasional eccentricity and self-sufficient indifference to convention. (For instance, he turned down a prestigious chair at Cambridge University without even deigning to reply to the letter that offered him the post.) In other words, he seems well set to be the Bobby Fischer of American philosophy. Because of this, one cannot but turn to a book by Kripke on Wittgenstein with interest, and one is not disappointed.

The book does not wish or claim to deal with the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophy. But it does single out a theme, a problem and a solution, which is, in fact and in Kripke's estimation, absolutely central to Wittgenstein's thought. If anything, Kripke rather gives the impression that Wittgenstein's alleged discovery of this problem is a greater achievement than the proffered solution:

> Wittgenstein has invented a new form of scepticism. Personally I am inclined to regard it as the most radical and original sceptical problem that philosophy has seen to date, one that only a highly unusual cast of mind could have produced.

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The most radical skeptical problem yet—that is a strong claim.

What is this problem? A crucial feature of intellectual life is our capacity to think and use language, that we use abstract terms such as "man" which refer to an open-ended, indeed a potentially infinite class of objects. So, it would seem there must be something within us that helps us to recognize and determine whether the next object to arouse our interest is, or is not, a man. What exactly is that something?

So far, this is simply the old problem of universals. Just what is it that binds together all the exemplars of one abstract notion, and just how do we deploy it so as to group things together correctly? What does seem original in Wittgenstein's formulation is that he rams it home by way of a new strategy, borrowed from the problem of the justification of scientific generalizations. This problem starts from the observation that all data in our possession are always, inevitably, finite. We can never be sure that the data that come our way in the future will still fit into the generalization set up on the basis of past data.

This argument can then be applied to each language user. A person applying an abstract term has already chosen a set of elements and will go on to choose further ones. To use the kind of example much favored in this discussion: if we overhear a man muttering 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, etc., it is very natural for us to conclude that for some reason he is going through the list of even numbers. But what he might well be doing could be something quite different.

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He might be performing a compulsive private ritual that leads him to list all even numbers up to a given very high number and thereafter to repeat the number 7 as long as there is breath in his body. And the point is, however long a series we have of the numbers he has already uttered, we shall never be able to exclude a whole infinity of rival interpretations that differ from the one we had originally adopted. So how do we know what concept, what rule of inclusion (and of ordering, in the cases in which this applies) he is really using?

The answer is that we shall never know for certain as long as all we have to go by is the series or class of objects that he recognizes or mutters. The situation might seem to change if we are allowed to ask him a question and he deigns to answer. Nature is mute, but men are not. So we can ask him. If he tells us he is going through even numbers, well that's it: we now know what he is up to, or so we think.

Kripke, expounding Wittgenstein, is quick to undeceive us. Not so. The man says that he is "going through even numbers" (and to simplify matters, we assume that he is truthful). But how do we know what that set of words actually means to him? It might mean to him what we would call "going through even numbers up to a certain high number and repeating 7 ad infinitum." Well, of course, we interrogate him further by means of some more clarifying phrases to see whether he really means what we call going through even numbers, or whether he is going through the (to us) somewhat weird ritual that in his language is called "listing even numbers." But he might in turn interpret any new explanatory phrase in an eccentric way. So the problem of interpreting correctly what he says reappears at each stage, and hence (claims Kripke) we are never really in possession of data other than the objects included in the list so far. In the end, it seems, there are only examples, specimens, but not explications, of concepts.

So you can never really identify or pin down a concept, fix the way in which a given abstract term will and will not be applied to future instances, either by explication or by the list of examples available so far. So what is this uniquely potent skepticism excogitated by Wittgenstein? It is best to sum it up in Kripke's words:

> There can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. Each new application we make is a leap in the dark; any present intention could be interpreted so as to accord with anything we may choose to do. So there can be neither accord, nor conflict.

This could be called the existentialist theory of meaning: every application of a word is a free unconstrained *acte gratuit*. Be it noted that neither Wittgenstein nor Kripke actually holds this theory: Wittgenstein's great achievement, according to Kripke (the Wittgenstein Paradox, as one of Kripke's chapter headings has it), is to show us that there is no way out of this paradoxical situation if we try to handle it with traditional philosophical tools. Kripke observes:

> It is important to see that his [Wittgenstein's] achievement in posing this problem stands on its own, independent of the value of his own solution of it.

If we have now seen, at least in outline, the alleged problem and its importance, let us go straight to a sketch of Wittgenstein's solution, as expounded by Kripke:

> Wittgenstein finds a useful role in our lives for a "language game" that licenses, under certain conditions, assertions that someone "means such-and-such" and that his present application of a word "accords" with what he "meant" in the past. It turns out that this role, and these conditions, involve reference to a community. They are inapplicable to a single person considered in isolation.

Or again, even more striking and provocative, Kripke sums up the solution he attributes to Wittgenstein in an important and illuminating footnote:

> We do not all say 12 + 7 = 19 and the like because we have grasped the concept of addition; we say we all grasp the concept of addition because we all say 12 + 7 = 19 and the like.

So, it is communal consensus that makes addition. As far as I know, the above is not an actual quotation from Wittgenstein, but a statement made up by Kripke and credited to the spirit of Wittgenstein's solution, so as to bring out certain very illuminating parallels between Wittgenstein and William James and David Hume and a whole class of theories

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The 1983 Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards

The Christian Gauss Award

THE IDEA OF LYRIC: LYRIC MODES IN ANCIENT AND MODERN POETRY. *W. R. Johnson. University of California Press. $22.50. Paper, $7.95.*

Citation: *The Idea of Lyric* will reward a careful reader, who will discern the several dimensions of its vision—its chiseled brevity, its beauty of style, its critical intelligence, and its infectious love of all Western literature. It is a pleasure to reread Sappho, Horace, Catullus, Vergil, Mallarmé, Whitman, and more in Johnson's inspired and challenging interpretations. Johnson discerns archetypal modes of lyric in their various metamorphoses: personal versus impersonal, inner-directed and outer-directed, lyric of the first person singular and plural ("solo" and "choral")—with a brilliant presentation of Whitman as a choral poet. Finally, Johnson is able to put his observations of the lyric mode into a context of universal history. Rarely does "the idea of lyric" have so much substance and acquire so palpable a reality as in Johnson's book.

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

HEN'S TEETH AND HORSE'S TOES: FURTHER REFLECTIONS IN NATURAL HISTORY. *Stephen Jay Gould. W. W. Norton & Company. $15.50.*

Citation: Stephen Jay Gould gives us everything that we would wish in a recipient of a Phi Beta Kappa award: literacy, historical sense, scientific instruction, and the pleasure that comes from reading a very good book. As well as reflections on the stated topics of hen's teeth and horse's toes, there are instructions on why large animals don't move on wheels and whether zebra stripes are white on a dark background or the other way around. Each essay provides not only fascinating detail about the natural world but brings fresh insights to some scientific problem or some human concern—and does so in prose that is easy and clear. This collection of essays on such diverse topics is unified both by the brilliance of the writing and by the breadth and depth of Stephen Gould's vision of biological processes in the general context of our evolutionary history. The book also includes essays on social concerns—matters that have always been an important component of Stephen Gould's writing and thinking.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

THE WAR WITHIN: FROM VICTORIAN TO MODERNIST THOUGHT IN THE SOUTH, 1919–1945. *Daniel Joseph Singal. University of North Carolina Press. $27. Paper, $12.*

Citation: Daniel J. Singal provides us with a masterful study of the myths that controlled the South's understanding of itself during its painful transition from a Victorian frame of mind to a distinctively modernist consciousness. *The War Within* richly documents and tactfully analyzes the myth of the cavalier. It exposes the falsity of this gentlemanly perspective on southern reality and shows how southern modernists worked to destroy that myth, how the myth contributed to cultural repression, and how the myth itself was a product of a larger circle of repressive reactions to southern marginality within an emergent modernist America. Singal dramatizes the lives and works of the southern "fugitives" (Ransom, Tate, Davidson, Warren); sympathetically resurrects the activities of such interesting minor figures as Odom and Couch; and tellingly probes the atmosphere of two dominant centers of changing southern consciousness, Chapel Hill and Nashville. In this skillful wedding of narrative and analysis, Professor Singal contributes to the revival of a brand of historiography that recently fell upon evil days but now shows signs of a new and unsuspected vitality and relevance to contemporary intellectual concerns.

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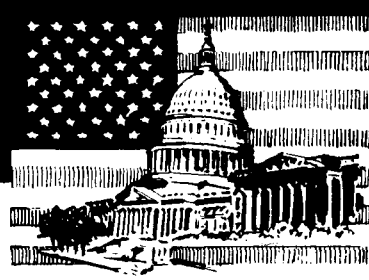

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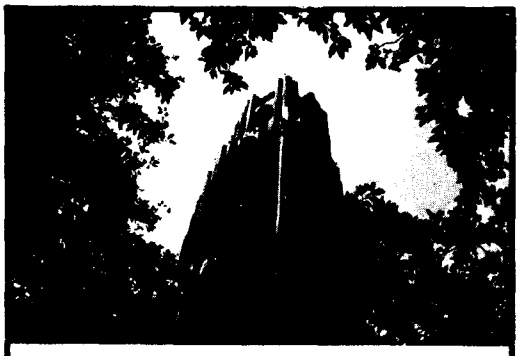

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that consist, in Kripke's excellent phrase, of "reversing priorities." For instance, Kripke sums up Hume's doctrine of causation as follows:

> Fire and heat are not constantly conjoined because fire causes heat; fire causes heat because they are constantly conjoined.

Instead of aiming to explain constant conjunction by a mysterious nexus called "causation," Hume said that all that causation amounts to is constant conjunction. And similarly, what Wittgenstein has done, as summed up by Kripke and shorn of all qualifications and waverings and insurances, is to say that it isn't conceptual compulsion that makes for social consensus, *it is social consensus that makes for conceptual compulsion, and indeed that makes concepts at all.*

We used to think, naively, that the astonishing consensus of so much of mankind about the result of simple arithmetical additions and some other matters is due to the objective validity of the principles of addition and the strange mysterious hold they have over our minds (sometimes dubbed "reason," as if that explained anything). Not so. *Concepts maketh community.* According to Kripke:

> If the individual in question no longer conforms to what the community would do in these circumstances, the community can no longer attribute the concept to him. Even though, when we . . . attribute concepts to individuals, we depict no special "state" of their minds, we do something of importance. We take them provisionally into the community, so long as further deviant behaviour does not exclude them. In practice, such deviant behaviour rarely occurs.
>
> It is, then, in such a description of the game of concept attribution that Wittgenstein's sceptical solution consists.

This passage could hardly be clearer. The normal (and in my view correct) assumption that some societies have attained some concepts that can coerce thought *in defiance* of mere consensus and, instead, in deference to rational criteria is simply denied. We had supposed that a society that operates with, say, the notion of even numbers continues to live under the obligation to follow 6 by 8, even if some outburst of collective religious mania led to a reversal of consensus on this point. But this is denied.

The occasions in Western history when a society reversed its previous consensus because it thought it recognized the implications of a previous idea that had hitherto not been implemented (the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, ideological revolutions) are of the very first importance: but if Wittgenstein's "solution" is adopted, they become totally unintelligible. This solution dissolves the overwhelmingly important, and admittedly mysterious, normative power of concepts into the descriptive fact of behavioral concensus. (Denials notwithstanding, a behaviorist reductionism is hidden within this theory of meaning.)

Kripke makes it quite plain:

> On Wittgenstein's conception, a certain type of traditional—and overwhelmingly natural—explanation of our shared form of life is excluded. We cannot say that we all respond as we do to "68 + 57" *because* we grasp the concept of addition in the same way, that we share common responses to particular addition problems *because* we share a common concept of addition.

No, on this theory it is the other way round. It isn't that shared concepts bring us together. It is togetherness that constitutes shared concepts. *Gemeinschaft* alone breathes life into *Begriffe*. No need to ask, with Goethe, what happens *wo Begriffe fehlen*. . . . As long as we stick together, concepts cannot be lacking. Togetherness in reactions is a concept. Nothing else can make a concept; nothing else can endow it with that continuity of meaning without which thought is impossible. Reason is the creature of shared custom. Men are not brought into a consensual community by the shared compulsion of reason: it is a consensual community, and that alone, that endows us with shared concepts and thus bestows on us the gift or the illusion of reason. *Am Anfang war die Gewohnheit. (Und auch am Ende, nichts bleibt als die Gewohnheit.)* Reason is and ought to be the slave of custom.

So, no further need for the abortive search for the principles underlying our formation of concepts, our ability to apply concepts correctly to infinite classes. We had all been looking in the wrong places—in Platonic repositories of abstract norms of conceptual

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rectitude, or in the inner recesses of our psyche, where a private homunculus was matching standard samples with new specimens, or in external physical, "operationalized" touchstones. These solutions, proposed by Platonists, early empiricists, and later instrumentalists respectively, were all abortive, and Wittgenstein, it seems, has shown them to be so. Look elsewhere: the sheer brute fact of consensus, if and when it occurs, does not so much engender, it constitutes, it *is* our conceptual life! As Kripke puts it:

> If there was no general agreement in the community responses, the game of attributing concepts to individuals . . . could not exist.

No consensus (by and large, for a few deviations are allowed), no concepts. Communal consensus, being the sole matrix of concepts, must consequently, in Kripke's account, be *sovereign:*

> The set of responses in which we agree, and the way they interweave with our activity, is our *form of life*. . . . Wittgenstein stresses the importance of agreement, and of a shared form of life, for his solution to his sceptical problem.

Remember that Wittgenstein said that "forms of life" were a kind of ultimate data beyond the reach of questioning. My form of life, right or wrong. It is all a bit like the theory that judges are not controlled by the law, but that the law is what judges decide—and, like that theory, it is a half-truth and can make little sense of the occasional powerful influence of statute law, though it does apply much better to customary law. Wittgenstein's notorious lack of historical interest or imagination was not just a personal idiosyncracy: it was the essence of his thought, and without it he could not have held the views he did hold.

Again Kripke says:

> Our licence to say of each that we mean addition by "+" is part of a "language game" that sustains itself *only* because of the *brute fact* that we generally agree. (Emphasis mine.)

A similar formulation appears as part of his summary:

> The success of . . . practices . . . depends on the *brute fact* that we agree with each other in our responses. . . . This success cannot be explained by "the fact that we all grasp the same concepts." (Emphasis mine.)

To call something a "brute fact" is to say that no explanation can be given of it, and Kripke makes it plain that this is indeed intended. It is of course just a fact, brute or other, that a given style of thought contains the notion of addition at all; it is not at all a brute fact that, given that notion, answers to problems of addition are uniquely determined. Kripke really does at times talk as if it were a mere "brute fact" and says that the only possible explanations of "the rough conformities in our mathematical behaviour" could occur "on the neurophysiological level."

All these quotations should make plain the solution that Kripke credits to Wittgenstein, though so far without the qualifications, insurances, and safety nets.

There is a striking parallel (unexplored by Kripke) between this alleged demonstration by Wittgenstein of the impossibility of transcending our concepts (they are the creatures of our custom) and Bishop Berkeley's demonstration of the impossibility of transcending our *sensations*. The paths leading toward the conclusion in each case are also similar. Berkeley thought that the idea of abstraction was the snare that led people to the mistaken supposition of a substrate matter independent of sensation, and Wittgenstein supposed that the idea of a common universal linguistic form, and it alone, led people to the supposition of a supracustomary, normative language, anchored to reality in a transconsensual, transcustomary manner. In each case, a shared universality is denied by each of the two thinkers as a means toward the affirmation of a strict immanence. In one case, mankind is enjoined to remain within the bounds of its sensations, and in the other, within the bounds of its customary concepts (and hence the commonsensical ordinary world they engender), on pain of committing a profound philosophical error. This is the link between his view of language and concept formation and his vindication of the *Lebenswelt*, the world of common sense.

So, just as there were no sensations beyond our sensations, there are to be no concepts beyond our concepts. A crucially important

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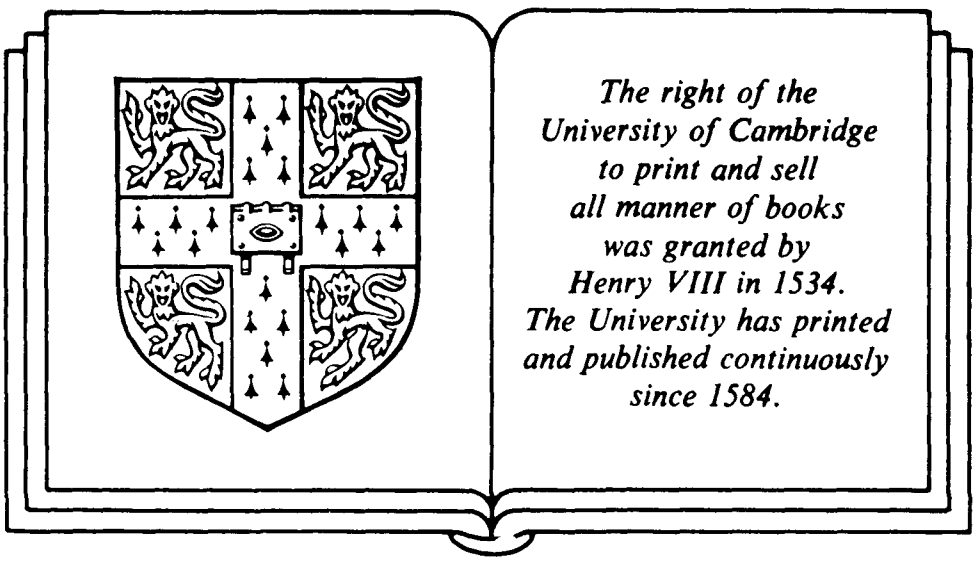

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implication of this apparent modesty is that there is and can be nothing whatsoever that could constitute a check on our (customary) concepts, which are thereby given a kind of left-handed, by-default absolute validation. (A curious dogmatism lurks behind the alleged skepticism.) In either case, we reach a kind of terminal wall and have to accept it, or so we are told. That is the argument.

There are also, of course, significant differences between the Berkeleian and Wittgensteinian cases. The divergencies between the conceptual systems of various cultures are far greater than the divergencies between their sensory perceptions. Hence, given the indisputable historical facts of interaction between societies and of radical social change, we have to choose between rival conceptual systems (however final they claim to be), whereas the shared sensory base of mankind we can more easily accept as terminal. We must seek for an extraneous norm that sits in judgment on concepts, but we are not obliged to do the same unto our sensations. (The whole point of empiricism was precisely the attempt to use *sensations* as the ultimate court of appeal for *concepts*.)

The consequence of Wittgenstein's theory (as lucidly described by Kripke) is that it assimilates the most opportunist, socially time-serving concepts, with cognitively effective, well-operationalized concepts, fit to serve as tools for a genuine and cumulative exploration of nature. *Each* is presented as simply custom-based and ineligible for any validation outside and beyond custom and contingent consensus.

Formulated thus, in the abstract, this only constitutes an oddity, an unacceptable paradox. When, however, this leveling out, this relativism, is articulated in terms of entire cultures, it then places a cognitively cumulative culture on the very same level as stagnant and self-revering ones. So the theory does constitute an implicit philosophy of history and a sociology.

In his confused, somnambulistic, and ahistorical way, Wittgenstein was half-aware of all this. He was taking sides in the romanticism-scientism debate, even though he did not properly understand it. Note that he could not be clear about it; it was an essential part of his position that false philosophy sprang from the misguided unitarian, normative theory of language, that it prejudged nothing, that it "left everything as it is." Hence to place his contribution explicitly in the context of the enormous debate of which in fact it is part would require one to believe that all those religious and intellectual movements, which preached that there were indeed extracustomary norms that sit in judgment on our concepts—for instance, the Reformation or the Enlightenment—are simply by-products of a mistake about the nature of language. If only Luther and Voltaire had been told how language functions, they would not have striven to reform the conceptual custom of their time. If you believe that, you will believe anything.

Wittgenstein's appeal lies in the fact that he provides a strange kind of vindication of romanticism, of conceptual *Gemeinschaft*, of custom-based concepts rather than statute-seeking reform, and that he does so through a very general theory of meaning, rather than from the more usual premises habitually used for this purpose. Because there is no unique formal notation valid for all speech, each and every culture is vindicated. One never knew this could be done—and so quickly too! It is this above all that endows this philosophy with such capacity to attract and to repel. Wittgenstein's mystique of consensual custom denies that anything can sit in judgment on our concepts, that some may be more rational and others less so. So all of them are in order and have nothing to fear from philosophy, as indeed he insists. This is a fairly mild form of irrationalism, invoking not any fierce dark gods but only a consensual community. It is the soft porn of irrationalism.

He himself half knew all this. It is a curious feature of Kripke's book that this aspect of the matter and its implications for our views of man, society, and history, which really are absolutely fundamental, are almost totally ignored. Reading Kripke you might well suppose that all that is at stake is an abstruse problem about the nature of concept formation, which is of little interest outside the philosophic trade. But though Wittgenstein is wrong, he is not quite so irrelevant. Kripke does incidentally make some interesting observations about the relationship between Wittgenstein's and Chomsky's ideas. But basically the matter is very simple. The essence of

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Chomsky is that he has seen how very much our linguistic competence is a problem, and he goes about trying to solve it. The essence of Wittgenstein is that he treats our culturally idiosyncratic, shared conceptual competence as a solution "to be accepted" as something final.

It should be clear now what a striking inversion of our normal attitude this solution of Wittgenstein requires. It is curious that Wittgenstein should have made quite an impact in America. For obvious and well-known historical reasons, Americans tend to be natural Contractarians, who suppose that they bring preexistent concepts and values, endowed with self-evident authority, to the formation of a national consensus. Americans like to think that they create their society in the light of their own preexistent ideas, rather than mystically drawing their ideas from the conceptual womb of a preexisting community. Recent trends in American political thought have revived such assumptions, or perhaps have simply reaffirmed a continuing tradition. (Conceptual intuitions, it appears, can easily survive a "veil of ignorance.")

It is East and Central Europeans who tend to be romantics/populists, seeing concepts and, above all, their authority and affective charge welling up from the depths of an idiosyncratic, nonuniversal, communal consciousness. (*Blut, Boden und Begriff*, as you might say.) Wittgenstein was very much a part of this tradition, though he had little if any inkling of it or of its historical context and implications, and the universal transcommunal idiom against which he was reacting was not French classicism or Enlightenment philosophy but only the notation of set theory.

This, then, is the overall plot of the book, without some of the small print. What are we to make of it? One must not, of course, identify Kripke with Wittgenstein: in this book, Kripke speaks as an expositor rather than as one expounding his own views, though of course he allows himself many asides that convey his own opinions, and there can be no doubt about his admiration for his subject. It may be useful to discuss the two of them in turn, and to take Kripke first.

The question has initially been formulated as follows—is Kripke really the Bobby Fischer of American philosophy? This is a useful way of putting it, because it enables us to separate his opening, his middle game, and his end game. Let me say right away that I greatly admire his middle game, but I am not too impressed by either his opening or his ending.

Kripke's opening game is sadly and characteristically Wittgensteinian and ought indeed to be called Ludwig's Gambit. The reader-opponent is softened up by a barrage of repetitive examples that hammer in a point having a plausible aspect and other implausible aspects, without at the same time clarifying just what it is that is being argued; thus the reader-opponent is pushed into an unwelcome bulk purchase. The point being rammed home is that there is no fact and can be none, inner or outer, that would establish what rule, what series, what concept a given individual is applying. It is indeed true that there is no fact, inner or outer, transcendent or natural, that could do the job of unambiguously identifying the rule of selection that is being followed: this elimination of possible principles of concept formation clears the way, as we have seen, for Wittgenstein's solution, which is that communal custom, and nothing else, can be the foundation of our conceptual world. As you might put it, there are no natural kinds, there are only social kinds—and each society makes up its own.

In expounding the paradoxical conclusion, the denial of any specifiable delimitation or basis for our concepts (which is then to be overcome only by the Wittgensteinian invocation of social consensus, as a kind of concept-generating black box or deus ex machina), Kripke fails to make, or at any rate to press home, a number of very crucial distinctions. For instance, he does not distinguish between the very strong and highly implausible thesis that no concepts can really be explicated, that all of them emerge directly from the black box of a given culture or "form of life" and are thereby, and in no other way, validated; and a much weaker and more plausible claim, which many people might accept, to the effect that the inexplicability paradox does instead apply to certain basic notions (either you have them or you don't), but that unambiguous instructions as to how to apply very many

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derivative notions can be formulated, for the benefit and use of all those equipped with the initial set.

This is a far more plausible position than the suggestion that all our concepts are directly linked to and dependent on the black box of culture, that each, as it were, separately depends for its meaning on the convergence of verbal custom; and this distinction deserves more thorough discussion than it actually receives. Some of the space devoted to the Wittgensteinian barrage of examples might more profitably have been devoted to it. Of course, such a distinction would not serve Wittgenstein's purpose: there is the possibility (for many people, the hope) that those basic indefinables, which would render all other concepts explicitly specifiable, are not linked to individual cultures, but are humanly universal; and second, such an approach might lead one to try to isolate those self-sufficient, conceptual, clear, and distinct elements and to erect a tidy structure on them. Such a Cartesian procedure or approach is, of course, precisely what Wittgenstein wishes to destroy; all concepts, he tells us, are equally "humble." But if that approach can be demolished, one would prefer to see it done by argument rather than by ignoring it.

Kripke's opening leaves me very far from convinced that the argument leading to the alleged skeptical paradox is indeed cogent. I for one am not at all clear that I am indeed susceptible to this newly discovered, and allegedly potent, skeptical virus. But one thing is absolutely and overwhelmingly certain: the proffered cure is far, far worse than the questionably imputed illness. I am not at all sure that I have been infected; but if I were, which I do not think I am, I would find such a condition infinitely preferable to the therapy offered by Wittgenstein.

Just consider what has happened. An attempt has been made to tell us that we cannot really be sure of having grasped even a very simple and lucid rule, such as the one generating the series 2, 4, 6, 8, etc., because however long the list, it might be exemplifying some rule other than the most obvious one, and the ambiguity is only eliminated if we already understand the rule intended. Of course it is only a paradox, and we are not meant to conclude that we really don't grasp the notion of a series of even numbers. But we *are* meant to concede that we cannot explain how the trick is done—that it is much harder to explain than we had supposed—and therefore to allow ourselves to be pushed into the one solution that is then offered—it is the black box of culture, it is our shared form of life, what done it.

Well! Our standards of what is comprehensible have become so high that we can't really grasp the notion of adding 2 to previous even numbers, but we *are* expected to grasp, and be content with (treat as final, ultimate), without further anxiety, the sociological notion of culture, of a form of life, of a kind of socioconceptual matrix, which endows a whole population with its conceptual wealth, by methods that are not to be scrutinized further!

> What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—forms of life. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

The form of life, it appears, is a hidden culture, which like a hidden god neither offers nor owes any explanations to its subjects. Its verdicts are both final and inscrutable, and there are and can be no further and higher standards in the names of which they could be challenged, for it is the ultimate and sole and only possible source of standards.

When we are taught to grasp the paradox, to be infected with the skeptical virus, our logic has to be incredibly fastidious for us to realize that we can find no warrant either in our inner consciousness, or in our operational instrument, or in the heavens above for using even the most lucid concepts that we do use. (Neither the starry heavens above nor the law within can help us, it appears.) In fact, we have to attain a standard of logical fastidiousness that had not been attained by any thinker prior to Wittgenstein, for only he, says Kripke, managed to think up this doubt, in all the two-and-a-half-odd millenia of philosophical reflection.

But having done it, having raised ourselves to this quite unprecedented altitude of doubt, we are suddenly asked to relax our logical standards and to be content with, to rest upon, the notion of a form of life, of culture. The bizarre joker card of a "form of life" is played, and we are to accept it without question. This really is logical antinomianism with a ven-

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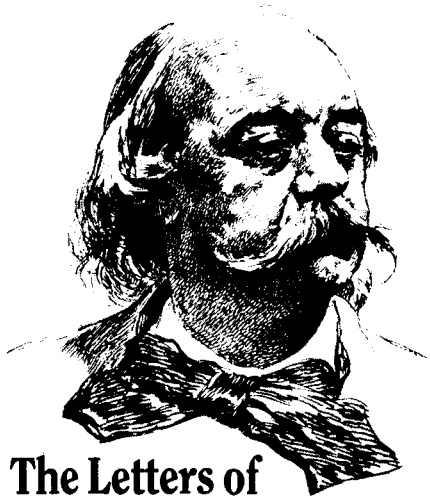

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geance—the alternation of utmost severity and near-total license. Who has decreed these astonishing rules of the game? Note that the sociological concept of culture (the nearest equivalent in public language to Wittgenstein's private notion of a "form of life") is a kind of protoconcept, useful enough as a shorthand indication of a certain cluster of phenomena, but in no way precise enough to constitute, when used on its own, any kind of serious explanation of anything. It can cover anything from the shared assumptions of a small guild to the shared assumptions of all mankind. (The looseness and pliability of this key explanatory concept of the whole system is not unconnected with its popularity.)

There is a really important difference between causation and conceptualization, between Hume and Wittgenstein, which Kripke, so keen on the Hume-Wittgenstein parallel, does not seem to have spotted. Hume, says Kripke, showed that causation does not explain regular succession, it *is* regular succession; and Wittgenstein similarly shows that concepts do not explain consensual reactions, they *are* consensual reactions. But in the case of nature, there are only facts and no norms. In trying to establish precisely what ultimate regularities there are in nature, we can only observe the data and allow them to decide. It really would make no sense whatever—at any rate, in our non-animist age—to say that a certain set of data is in a minority but nevertheless possesses greater normative authority than the majority and consequently should be obeyed. There are no minority laws of nature.

It is by no means obvious to me that this is so with the laws of reason. A given concept may cogently contain implications that, through a failure of clear thought, a majority of the users of that concept has failed to perceive. At some stage, a minority, even a small minority, may spot the implication and its cogency, and its view may eventually prevail. Major events that at least look as if they fit this description have occurred in human history: they may in fact be the most important events in all intellectual history. On Wittgenstein's theory of meaning, such an event becomes an a priori impossibility.

> "False moves" can only exist as an exception. For if what we now call by that name became the rule, the game in which they were a false move would have been abrogated. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

Wittgenstein here makes plain that, in his view, majorities make or break concepts.

There is another distinction or difficulty that Kripke does mention (in fact it is crucial for both his opening and his end game), but he simply does not pursue it far enough. This point can perhaps be approached best through what is the central, the most fundamental, difficulty for Wittgenstein. Suppose the proffered solution to be correct: that it is culture and culture alone (the "form of life") that makes our concepts and, above all, that endows them with what authority they possess. It follows immediately that, conceptually speaking, a culture can do no wrong, for, after all, it alone sets the standards, there being no other possible source, and so there is no standard in terms of which it in turn could ever do wrong. So every culture makes its own world, sets it own criteria or reality. Culture has the monopoly of legitimate conceptualization. Some followers of Wittgenstein have warmly, indeed ecstatically, welcomed this conclusion.

But neither Wittgenstein nor Kripke (in expounding him) wish to go that far or, at any rate, to do so consistently and all the time. The idea that each society or culture rolls its own reality as it pleases is exceedingly strong stuff, and the master shrinks from endorsing some extreme implications of it, and the expositor documents this well. Kripke is quite clear that, for instance, given the concept of addition as we know it, no society employing that concept has the power to interfere with what the sum of two given numbers happens to be. But in that case, is the role of communal cultural consensus to tell us just what concepts we happen to have, whilst the limits and authority of a concept, once given, spring from some other source? If that is all that is meant, then the doctrine of ultimacy of consensus of "forms of life" turns out to be rather tame and trivial.

My objection to Kripke's end game is that he simply does not push this central problem to a point where we can see where we stand on this absolutely crucial question. He concedes (and convincingly documents that Wittgenstein concedes) that concepts—or rather

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the rules governing their application—possess a kind of autonomy, a kind of authority that consensus or cultural custom cannot overrule. But in that case, what has happened to the Wittgensteinian solution to the problem of concept formation and of the mysterious power of concepts, of their evident capacity to determine what does or does not fall under them?

As far as I can see, Kripke endorses Wittgenstein's attempt to wriggle out of this (or if he does not endorse it, he certainly refrains from uttering any criticism of it). The mechanics of this wriggling consist, in effect, of saying that Wittgenstein is asking a new kind of question and that this new question can legitimately replace the old one. Wittgenstein is abandoning the quest for the specification of the necessary and sufficient conditions of application of this or that concept and replacing it by a new question, roughly: Under what conditions does a given community credit its members with comprehension? We shift from objects of speech to speech users, their purposes, customs, and social acceptability. This formulation then apparently does not preclude the members themselves being in possession of sufficient and necessary conditions (which thus would become more authoritative than communal consensus and which may, or may not, be reflected in consensus).

But the matter is not clear: it would seem that those truth conditions, if they exist, nevertheless cannot be formulated by us, for to do so would mean to break out of the circle of explications and examples, and it was shown to us that this cannot be done. So custom is not final, yet *only* custom may be invoked. When you look at Wittgenstein's philosophy as a whole, custom is king. When you focus on custom and consensus and ask whether they may err, you are reassured—yes, they may. Please make up your mind. A whole crucial passage is so wobbly in its meaning that it should be quoted extensively:

> One must bear firmly in mind that Wittgenstein has no theory of truth conditions—necessary and sufficient conditions—for the correctness of one response rather than another to a new addition problem. Rather he simply points out that each of us *automatically* calculates new addition problems (without feeling the need to check with the community whether our procedure is proper): that the community feels entitled to correct a deviant calculation: that in practice such deviation is rare, and so on. Wittgenstein thinks that these observations about sufficient conditions for justified assertion are enough to illuminate the role and the utility in our lives of assertion about meaning and determination of new answers. What follows from these assertability conditions is *not* that the answer everyone gives to an addition problem is, by definition, the correct one, but rather the platitude that, if everyone agrees upon an answer, no one will feel justified in calling the answer wrong.

As a matter of important historical fact, what Kripke calls a platitude is actually a falsehood. Brave and sometimes demented individuals have on occasion felt justified in defying consensus; and, on even rarer occasions, they were subsequently vindicated. Wittgenstein's theory seems to have no way whatever of coping with these supremely important cases when consensus and cogent criteria diverge. There can apparently be moral or political dropouts, but there can never be any conceptual dropouts: for if a man opts out of the conceptual consensus, his concepts drop out with him. I had always thought that Descartes had had a pretty good try at going it alone conceptually, but one must assume that he had failed.

But assume that what Kripke says is a platitude. It is of course true in many, many cases that mechanical consensus prevails. We are now being given a trite generalization about what people happen to do—they do agree on uncontentious, mechanically decidable matters such as addition, and in consequence credit each other with comprehension. Where previously we had been offered a daring, fascinating (though to me incredible), and very powerful theory in answer to a fundamental problem—namely, what accounts for the mysterious power of (some) concepts to elicit, compel, constrain similar responses?—we are now given a dud. The fascinating, teasing, "priority-reversing" answer had been: It isn't that something-or-other in the concept that compelled the consensual answer; on the contrary, it is the consensus as such (not explicable further, other than as a manifestation of a Holy Ghost named "form of life") that created the concept. Well, we may not have been convinced by this dramatically original theory (I certainly never was), but it sure was interesting. But now suddenly we are told that there is no theory here about

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what compels the answer, only a rather trite external description of what happens in cases of consensual use of mechanically applied notions.

It is all a bit as if, at some savage spectacle, we were all set to witness a terrible sacrifice, and at the very last moment a harmless, innocuous, obvious dummy were substituted for the sacrificial victim. Bathos replaces horror. We have been told that the most awe-inspiring imperatives of reason, of logic and mathematics, are about to be devoured by custom and consensus, we gape with frisson and with shame, and then a set of obvious pastry dummies is harmlessly gobbled up instead.

But there is more to it than that. Wittgenstein's work is permeated by the suggestions that the substitution is justified, that we should not complain of it, that this is all we can have and all that we should ask for, and that somehow the ersatz solution is as good or better than the real thing, and that if we don't see that, it is our fault and our understanding is defective, and that we are asking for the wrong thing because we don't understand how language really works. I for one see no reason for allowing myself to be bluffed into accepting this—all the more so as I can see the position (*and* Kripke's exposition of it) oscillating between the genuine and strong solution and the trivial solution. Two theories have gone into partnership, one strong and contentious and the other trivial. They take turns at standing at the counter. The strong one explains a lot; the trivial one wards off all critics. As long as they are allowed to stand in for each other in this manner, the partnership is invulnerable.

Transcendence of custom is the most important fact in the intellectual history of mankind. Somehow or other, some cultures have succeeded in subjecting at least part of their cognitive life to external criteria, in the sphere of both formal and empirical truths. (Even if this transcendence were an illusion, that illusion would still be supremely important.) Reality is not something that shows itself *in* a language, but is rather something that arises *for* languages and separates them; some attain far more of it than others. Wittgenstein presents us with the shocking claim that such transcendence is indeed an illusion and that custom alone is the foundation of all conceptual congruence. All customs are equal by default, for lack of supracustomary norms. When objections are raised, when we point out that concepts constrain us and that on occasion they do so independently of custom or even in violation of it, we are suddenly offered an unutterably trivial theory about routine situations that has no power to shock at all.

Of course I can see some good reasons for switching from a truth-condition-seeking theory of language to a social, functional one; but one reason for such a switch of vision that I will not accept is to use it as a smoke screen for the substitution of a trivial nonsolution for a strong, contentious solution to a real problem. And what really puzzles me is why Kripke, who must see what is going on, allows Wittgenstein to get away with it all, without comment.

So we have simply abandoned the philosophically supreme question as to what endows certain concepts with authority—for instance, why certain inferences are cogent—and replaced it with an impressionistic sociology of how, in fairly consensual communities, people credit each other with the mastery of locally pervasive ideas. If consensus is lacking, we just cease to attribute concepts to people, it seems, and we lose interest. I must say that both Wittgenstein and Kripke grossly underrate the frequency, and above all the historic importance, of nonconsensual situations. Interesting societies have survived without conceptual consensus. When under pressure the whole doctrine degenerates into the platitude that in consensual situations —where people by and large use the same concepts with the same results, mechanically and without reconsidering fundamentals—comprehension of a concept is pretty much the same as conformity with the culture. What else is new? (But what criteria do we apply if someone says something original, shocking, and is later applauded as being right?)

But the entire thrust of Wittgensteinism is that something far more potent and less trite is being said, and I simply cannot accept the claim that seems to constitute most of Kripke's end game that the problem-shift (from truth-conditions to socio-conditions, in effect) in any way excuses or justifies this ambiguity. Of course, the triviality of the solution is itself conceded and stressed by Wittgenstein himself, but with a persistent hint that, when

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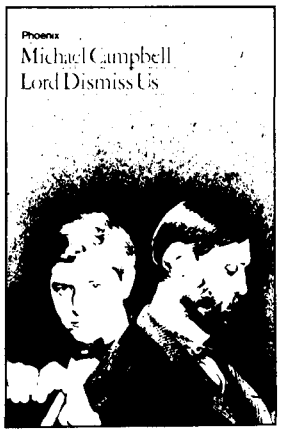

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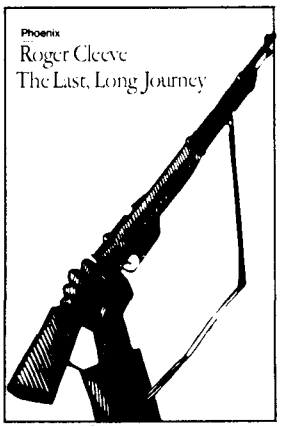

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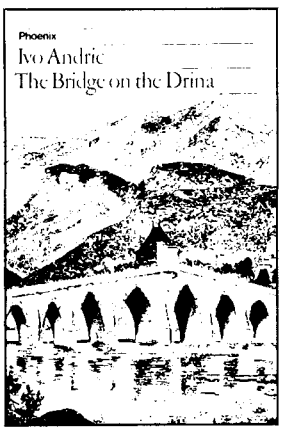

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properly understood, it is really important and profound after all.

My complaints about Kripke's opening and end game should now be clear. He allows the master to get away with far too much, far too easily, both in the initial formulation of the problem and in connection with its solution. A real philosophical Bobby Fischer would have made mincemeat of this opponent both in the opening and in the end game, if it had ever come that far.

But this being said, it is only fair to add that Kripke's middle game is excellent. His interpretations of Wittgenstein seem to me convincing (in as far as Wittgensteinian exegesis can ever be an exercise with determinate answers), and the manner in which he places Wittgenstein in the context of the history of philosophy (though not, alas, of social history) and of other thinkers is genuinely illuminating. For instance, I am fully convinced by the parallel he draws between Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematics and sensation. Each of these spheres had been used by thinkers eager to anchor our concepts directly onto something transsocial and more than merely consensual; and it is important for Wittgenstein to block each of these attempts, and he does it in an essentially similar way. Neither the most private sensation nor the most formal and rigorous deduction is allowed to be a Jacob's ladder that would enable us to escape from the closed circle of shared-custom-based ideas.

Leaving Kripke aside, why do Wittgenstein and his errors matter? The basic issue is really the authority of concepts. How do they manage to constrain our thought, speech, and conduct? Is it all merely cultural, or is it at least sometimes, say in great intellectual advances, transsocial? Platonists, religious believers, rationalists, empiricists, and naturalists have all been at one in supposing that some concepts, at least, possess an authority that transcends culture, so that an entire community can be in error. The truth sometimes molds us; we do not collectively invent it. These various types of thinker differed, of course, in where they located the source of that authority, but they were at one in refusing to place it in communal consensus. No conceptual community could be a law unto itself.

Some concepts almost certainly are "purely cultural." For instance, if a given community has a list of ritually sacred objects, there may simply be no rhyme or reason concerning just why the list of these objects should be precisely what it is. An anthropologist can do no more than enumerate it and, perhaps, convey its spirit and the way in which it interlocks with other institutions. Where concepts are open and admit of new instances, the matter may be more difficult. If the concept is a multistranded one, a syndrome rather than something rigorously defined (a set of "family resemblances," in Wittgenstein's terms), members of the community who share its spirit may agree on the delimitation of new cases, yet be hard put to explain how they do it. Its many-strandedness will, of course, make the concept socially manipulable and opportunistic. And finally, at the other end of the spectrum, there seem to be concepts whose application seems impersonal, single-stranded, fairly unambiguous, which seldom generate dissent, which seem fairly detached from the other institutions of any one culture, and which seem to be prominent in those cognitive structures that have grown so remarkably in the last three centuries or so. Wittgenstein does not recognize the significance of these differences. Ironically, though he talks as if he had invented the diversification of linguistic function, when it comes to the validation of concepts, he unifies everything under a single and misguided formula.

Kripke's exegesis, though very illuminating and correct as far as it goes, does in some ways misrepresent the spirit of Wittgenstein's philosophy. It makes it sound as if Wittgenstein had thought up a new problem and then found a solution to it, as if the two steps were separable and we could take one without the other. In fact, Wittgenstein's philosophy is far more of a unity than that. The solution is embraced for reasons other than and in addition to the fact that it allegedly solves the problem highlighted by Kripke. The whole thing is not a neat two-stroke system, with one problem and one solution, but an interlocking whole, in which most parts sustain and are sustained by the others. Wittgenstein's oscillation between a strong and a trivial thesis, tolerated by Kripke, is reinforced by Wittgenstein's frequently reiterated metatheory, to the effect that there are and can be no contentious claims in philosophy:

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> Philosophy . . . leaves everything as it is.
>
> If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy it would never be possible to question them, because everyone would agree with them.
>
> Philosophy only states what everyone admits. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

In the light of this principle, which is central and not tangential to Wittgenstein (and intimately connected with his firmly stated doctrine that in philosophy one may describe but never explain or justify any usage), one would have to conclude that he only intends the cultural solution of the problem of concept formation in the most innocuous way possible, as indeed Kripke presents it when the doctrine gets into trouble. But no: as correctly presented by Kripke at other times, and indeed by himself, he also means the fascinating and shocking social theory of concept formation in its strong sense. And this, of course, is where we are entitled to get cross at the sleight of hand to which we have been subjected.

The falsity of the social theory of concepts is probably the single most important fact about the intellectual life of mankind. Somehow or other, men have become susceptible in their thought to constraints other than those of mere social consensus. In recent centuries, there has been an important shift from the use of merely social to genuinely cognitive concepts: this is normally known as the Scientific Revolution. Wittgensteinism makes it impossible to ask any questions about this event, for on its terms nothing of the kind could ever occur or could make any sense.

Wittgenstein makes his attitude to these matters plain in a remarkable passage (in *Philosophical Investigations*) in which he compares arithmetical calculation with the ritual of a coronation. This putative analogy is the heart of the matter. In fact, the compulsiveness of a coronation ritual (for those who have deeply internalized its rules) may indeed feel similar to the compulsiveness of a simple arithmetical calculation; but, whatever the psychic feel of it all, the roots of the compulsiveness could hardly be more different. In recent centuries, our calculations have become incomparably more powerful than they had been, whilst our coronations have become much shakier. Cognition has expanded, whilst the social-moral order has lost its foundations. That is our predicament. We don't fully understand either aspect of it. Philosophy is an attempt to do so and to seek out whatever bases may be available for either calculation-and-verification on the one hand, or for coronations (and their modern equivalents) on the other. This need is not inspired by a misunderstanding of language and cannot be cured by descriptions of verbal custom, as Wittgenstein claimed. Wittgenstein taught a whole generation of philosophers to ask the wrong questions. Those who acclaim the gospel according to Ludwig generally do so because they love to see calculations demoted and coronations (or equivalents) receive this unexpected, welcome—and utterly illusory—vindication.

But conceptual compulsion cannot be reduced to social control. Social control cannot be reduced to conceptual compulsion. Wittgenstein has taught the former error to philosophers and the latter to social scientists, some of whom have come to think that the world is not the totality of things but of meanings. *Hermeneutik über Alles.*

As a tool toward understanding the central and differential philosophical problem—why are some cognitive systems so much more powerful and effective than others, how do some concepts attain an authority far above that of the mere contingent custom of any one community, how do they manage to lock in with reality with special effectiveness—the Wittgensteinian night, in which all conceptual cows are the same shade of communal gray, is of no use at all.

Call to Action

TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LIBERAL CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA. *By Joseph A. Varacalli. University Press of America. $23.75. Paper, $13.*

Reviewed by JAMES HITCHCOCK

Much of the non-Catholic world was startled in 1983 when the American Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter on war and

JAMES HITCHCOCK is professor of history at St. Louis University. His latest book is *The New Enthusiasts.*

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peace that was recognized as one of the more "dovish" contributions to the debate. The surprise mainly emanated from the fact that, historically, American Catholics have been considered one of the more conservative elements of the population.

The title of this book promises a good deal more than it delivers, in keeping with the now-common scholarly practice whereby very specific studies are transformed, for purposes of promotion, into cosmic disquisitions. The operative word in this title is *Toward*, and readers who expect a comprehensive survey of the changes in American Catholicism will be disappointed. But the author, who is a sociologist, does concentrate on a specific episode that does much to explain how a letter like that of 1983 could have been written, even though there is no direct connection between the two.

In 1975 the American bishops decided to observe the national bicentennial by what they termed the "Call to Action Conference." This would consist, first, of a series of parish and diocesan discussion groups over a period of some months; then of a series of national hearings at which testimony on various subjects would be invited; and finally of a massive convention at which delegates from all over the country would come together to hammer out a series of recommendations that would, in effect, serve as a Catholic agenda for the country's third century.

Although the evidence is spotty, it appears that only a small minority of the thousands of Catholic parishes in the United States ever attempted to hold regular Call to Action meetings, and the great majority of the laity was scarcely aware that the process was even going on. The five regional meetings brought forth a stream of witnesses whose positions ranged from moderately liberal to far left, with only a rare conservative or even centrist voice. Finally, at the convention in Detroit, several thousand delegates rushed through approval of a host of resolutions, some of which might have seemed rash even to a McGovernite caucus (for example, urging the church to work for the total redistribution of income and power throughout society and to institute "affirmative action" programs for race on all levels).

Even the mildly cynical, hearing in advance about the planned conference, might have suspected that the process would be rigged, and they would have been right. Most witnesses at the regional hearings were specially invited by the conference organizers. Dioceses mostly appointed their delegates to the national meeting, and about half of those chosen were priests or nuns. In addition, well over half, even among the laity, listed themselves as employed by the church.

What was astounding about the conference, therefore, was the fact that a managed process led to results more radical than an openly democratic one would have done. This was true not only with respect to secular political issues but to internal church matters as well—delegates supported the ordination of women to the priesthood, in direct contradiction to church teaching, and called into question other official doctrines as well. It is no exaggeration to say that, had the 182 resolutions of the Detroit meeting been implemented, the church in the United States would have been revolutionized.

Cynics would probably also have predicted that, faced with such results, the bishops would find ways of neutralizing the conference, and in fact, this also occurred, although "Call to Action" is still invoked by those in need of a charter for a church vastly different from the one they have. The mystery, however, is why the bishops permitted the playing out of a process by which their own authority was subverted, and only afterward tried to contain the damage. This is the question that rightly fascinates Varacalli, and the one his book attempts to answer.

Part of the answer lies in the fact that "the bishops" are not united on anything, and some prominent bishops (notably Cardinal John F. Dearden of Detroit) were actively in sympathy with the conference. During the 1970s the Vatican itself was appointing increasingly liberal bishops in the United States, due largely to the influence of the papal representative at the time, the Belgian Archbishop Jean Jadot.

Beyond that, however, the Catholic church was being affected by a process common to large modern institutions—the rise of a species of bureaucrat, allied or identified with the so-called "new class"—who is liberal, flexible, pragmatic, and change-oriented. Some of these are bishops; most are priests, nuns, or lay people in what can be called

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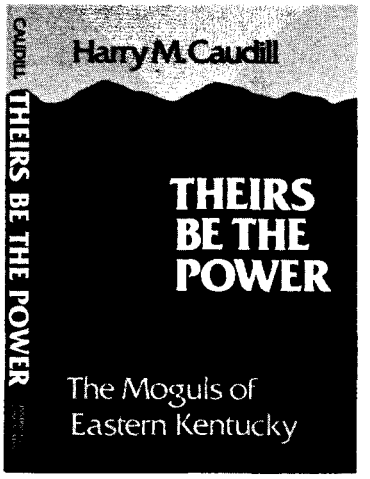

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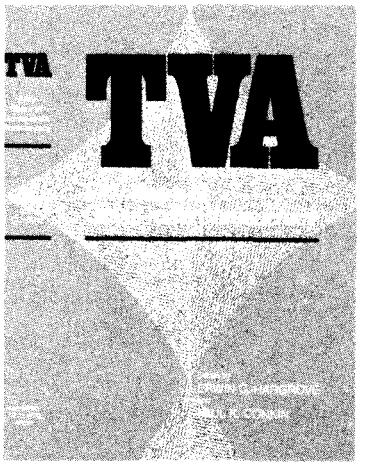

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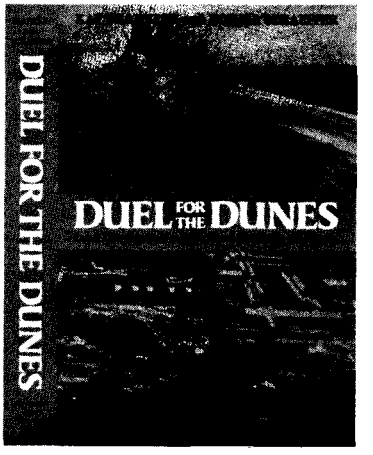

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middle-management positions in the church.

Varacalli traces a process by which many bishops were in effect robbed of their authority by professionals who could simply claim greater expertise than the bishops in particular areas and to whom most bishops ultimately deferred. The Call to Action Conference was thus a process by which this "new class" in the church sought to consolidate its power at the national level and to set the agenda for the future. Formally it failed. In fact, that agenda is very much alive.

Varacalli's analysis is a good deal more intricate and detailed than can be described here, and it will be fascinating to anyone who wants to understand how a conservative institution can be liberalized within an amazingly brief period of time. What was most fascinating about the Call to Action Conference was that the struggle was taking place simultaneously on two levels. On one level there was a substantive agenda, embodied in the resolutions and consisting of particular things the delegates wanted the church to do. But on another level it was an assertion of bureaucratic power against traditional episcopal authority. The bishops were put in a no-win situation. Whether they accepted the resolutions or were forced to reject them, they had lost the ball and henceforth were merely playing defensively.

The pastoral letter on war and peace has similar layers of meaning, apart from its contents. It, too, derives from bureaucratic initiatives to which the bishops were pressured to submit. Many, even among the more conservative bishops, seem to have regarded the letter as a way of regaining lost authority by putting themselves at the head of a movement that had previously been viewed as quasi-dissident. The "new class," however, has been glad to let the bishops "co-opt" their movement, not only because it gives them greater respectability, but because they think it presages a situation in which the bishops can be pressured into adopting increasingly "progressive" measures on other subjects. (Future letters are planned on capitalism and on women.) Once again the bishops are in a no-win situation, because they can assert their authority only by lending it to agendas ultimately controlled by others.

Both the Call to Action Conference and the war/peace letter will have consequences for American Catholicism that go well beyond the specific issues they involve. Varacalli's book is the best study to date explaining why this is the case.

The Saddest Story

ROBERT LOWELL: A BIOGRAPHY. *By Ian Hamilton. Random House. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT RICHMAN

Given the relish these days for scandalous life over honorable art, it should come as no surprise that Ian Hamilton's biography of the American poet Robert Lowell has attracted far more attention than any of the poet's books ever did. Considering the space that has been granted to this book by the sundry publications that normally act as if poetry, like some species of dinosaur, does not exist, we are confronted once again with the priorities of the reading public. Poetry is simply not read, at least not nearly as often as the story of a poet's life, even if the poetry contains, as many of Lowell's "confessional" works did, some dark facts about the poet's life. The biography *Robert Lowell* has even inspired Faber & Faber, the serious English publisher who brought out the book recently in England, to adorn the firm's outgoing mail with little pictures of Lowell's countenance, neatly printed by the machine that applies the postage. The words beneath the face read: "The literary biography of the year. Illustrated."

In a certain sense, all this attention has not been wasted. Robert Lowell was the premier American poet of a highly talented generation whose members included John Berryman, Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, Elizabeth Bishop, and Theodore Roethke. He was, for a good part of his career at least, a brilliant technician whose best poetry, unlike that of some of his notable contemporaries, is as powerful today as the day it was written. At the same time, Lowell was a lifelong mental patient who suffered—and made others suffer—greatly. If we add to this his impeccable American pedigree, his rather overwhelming

ROBERT RICHMAN's essays and reviews have appeared in the *New Criterion*, *Commentary*, the *Village Voice*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

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good looks, and his numerous love affairs, there is more than enough appeal for any number of gossips and intellectual groupies who have never cracked the binding of any of his books. Biographers do not, as a matter of course, concentrate on the details of the life so much that the intellectual concerns of the poet and man of letters are obscured. But in the case of Lowell, there is such an array of indelicate and unseemly facts—as Ian Hamilton makes abundantly clear—that little practical chance exists for the work (and the sensibility and rich culture that produced it) to get its proper due. This is unfortunate, for Lowell was a paramount figure in American culture, and we desperately need an intellectual biography of him. For the time being, we must apparently settle for a good deal of dirty linen.

Let us consider some of the events of Lowell's life as Hamilton has chronicled them. Robert Traill Spence Lowell, Jr., was born into considerable privilege in Boston in 1917. His father, a career naval officer named Robert Lowell, had as an ancestor James Russell Lowell, the emininent New England poet. His mother was Charlotte Winslow, the descendant of a distinguished Boston family. Her father, says Hamilton, was "ridiculously proud" of the fact that his forebears had supported George III. Scornful of his deeply ineffectual father and fearful and perplexed by his overbearing mother (after a row one night with her husband, Charlotte hugged her small son and declared, "Oh Bobby, it's such a comfort to have a man in the house"), the young Lowell developed into something of a bully. At St. Mark's School, he was frequently involved in scraps with schoolmates. He also collected soldiers, read military history, and wrote an essay called "War: A Justification." His general deportment at St. Mark's earned him the nickname "Cal," after either Caliban or Caligula. He lorded over a small circle of friends with, in Hamilton's words, a "brutal, childish" tyranny. Two of them, Blair Clark and Francis Parker, would admirably stick by Lowell throughout his life. Lowell did not do well academically at St. Mark's, but did come in contact with the poet Richard Eberhart, who was teaching there at the time.

It was while Lowell was a freshman at Harvard that he decided to become a poet. He was determined to let nothing deter him, least of all Harvard, which he left after one year. (Robert Frost, the Norton Lecturer during the year Lowell was there, reacted coolly to the young poet's work.) He chose his first girl friend—a recent debutante named Ann Dick—because of her willingness to become, as Hamilton relates, "a new, and utterly devout, disciple." Dinners at her family's home were occasions for Lowell to recite Milton, Shakespeare, and Donne. The relationship also provided Lowell with the opportunity to clash once again with his father. Mr. Lowell, it seems, had written a letter to Ann Dick's father suggesting improper behavior between the two young adults, with the further suggestion that they stop seeing one another. Upon learning of this letter, Cal returned home and knocked his father down.

Merrill Moore, the psychiatrist who at this point intervened, suggested that Lowell move to Vanderbilt University where a friend of Moore's, Allen Tate, was then teaching. The eager novitiate poet quickly became a member of Tate's household. Lowell began writing his first experiments in poetry on the Tate model—"organized hard and classical," as Lowell said. Then, after a year at Vanderbilt, he moved to Kenyon College in 1937 to study with John Crowe Ransom. It was here that Lowell met Randall Jarrell, Peter Taylor, and Robie Macauley. Earlier in the same year he had met another writer, Jean Stafford, at a conference he attended with Tate. In the spring of 1940, Lowell and Stafford were married. A few weeks later Lowell was graduated from Kenyon, the valedictorian of his class.

Between the brief time spent at Louisiana State University as a graduate student (studying with Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren) and his move to New York City the following year, Lowell became a Catholic. He forced Stafford, who had converted a few years earlier herself (but had recently lapsed), through a second, Catholic, marriage ceremony. The couple celebrated mass in the morning, benediction in the evening, and two rosaries a day. A Jesuit priest called Lowell "more Catholic than the Church." This assault on the Lowell-Winslow lineage—religion as war by other means—was not the same as striking his father, but it must have been even more painful.

As part of Lowell's new commitment to Catholicism, he refused to be drafted during

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the war. He put forth his objections to the Allied bombing of German civilians in a telegram to President Roosevelt. As Lowell would later say in a draft of the poem "Memories of West Street and Lepke" (from *Life Studies*), "My conscientious objector statement meant to blow the lid off / the United States Roosevelt and my parents." While Lowell was serving a prison sentence of a year and a day, Charlotte Lowell blamed the entire unhappy episode on the Tates, who, she claimed, had encouraged in her son "the emotional excitement of poetry."

The "retributive gusto," as Ian Hamilton calls it, of Lowell's Catholicism inspired the poems in his first book, *Land of Unlikeliness*, published by the Cummington Press in 1944. Hamilton sees in the poems "a high fever, a driven, almost deranged belligerence in both the voice and the vocabulary, as if poems had become hurled thunderbolts, instruments of grisly retribution." But Allen Tate's description of the character of the poems in his introduction to the volume includes an uncanny prophecy about the future course of Lowell's career. Tate wrote:

> On the one hand, the Christian symbolism is intellectualized and given a savage satirical direction; it points to the disappearance of the Christian experience from the modern world, and stands, perhaps, for the poet's own effort to recover it. On the other hand, certain shorter poems, like "A Suicidal Nightmare" and "Death from Cancer," are richer in immediate experience than the explicitly religious poems; they are more dramatic, the references being personal and historical and the symbolism less willed and explicit.

"Intellectualized" versus "immediate": Lowell's movement between these two poles will, as we shall see, become a permanent feature of his poetic career and, indeed, of his life.

Meanwhile, the Lowells' marriage, which, as Jean Stafford jokingly put it, had suffered from a diet of "too many iambs," ended. The real reason, however, was Lowell's having fallen in love with Gertrude Buckman, Delmore Schwartz's first wife. But "falling in love," in this case, was actually a symptom of the first stage of the dreaded manic-depressive cycle that now set in and would haunt Lowell to the end of his life. Each time the chronology of symptoms was exactly, horrifyingly, the same: an emotional winding up, an ecstatic flight from his present surroundings for a "new life" (the words Lowell himself repeatedly used), usually with the nearest available woman, a violent climax, and a denouement of straitjackets, padded cells, and, at least in the early years, shock treatment.

Lowell's second book, *Lord Weary's Castle*, appeared in 1946. After seeing the manuscript, Randall Jarrell wrote to Lowell, "You write more in the great tradition, the grand style, the real middle of English poetry, than anybody since Yeats." The book won a Pulitzer Prize and brought him an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award and a Guggenheim. The reviews glowed with the highest possible praise. There was reason for this clamor. Lowell's new work is more supple, more deft and ironic, than his previous work. The cascade of alliteration, allusion, and imagery in the poems in *Lord Weary's Castle* is held together by a firmly knit iambic pentameter line. But Lowell's determination to explore the paradoxes of Protestant America's past, using the searchlight of his new religion, reaches an almost mad level of intensity. The subject of his New England ancestry, which he will return to again and again (though in different forms), is at once full of rich particularity and deep philosophical resonances. Meanwhile a *Boston Globe* headline proclaimed: THE MOST PROMISING POET IN 100 YEARS . . . MAY BE GREATER THAN JAMES AND AMY? Reacting to the achievement of his twenty-nine-year-old son, Lowell's father remarked: "Poets seem to see more in his work than most other people."

In 1948 Lowell met the novelist and critic Elizabeth Hardwick at Yaddo, the writer's colony; they were married a year later. Following the death of Lowell's father in 1950, the couple moved to Italy. In 1951 Lowell published *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*. The book consists of a number of shorter poems and the 608-line title poem. In the marvelously successful shorter poems, such as "Falling Asleep Over the Aeneid" and "Mother Marie Therese," Lowell again plumbs the depths of history and poetic tradition. And the remarkable Lowell rhythms, which are like no one else's, are again metrically well contained, this time by heroic couplets. But the long title poem, about a woman lamenting her absent husband, was considered by most critics a colossal failure. Lowell's attempt to con-

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flate a large, symbolic, historically impressive structure and highly personal subject matter resulted, according to its critics, in a forced symbolism and a paralyzed story line. In other words, Lowell was stylistically stuck between the two poles in Tate's prophecy: the intellectualized and the immediate. Even Lowell's friend Randall Jarrell had to admit that the poem's "people too often seem to be acting *in the manner of* Robert Lowell, rather than plausibly."

But even more disturbing—and, in the end, influential—critical observations were put forth by William Carlos Williams in his review of *The Mills* in the *New York Times Book Review*. America's doyen of free verse chided Lowell for the "formal fixation of the line" and the "rhyme-track." Lowell, said Williams,

> appears to be restrained by the lines; he appears to *want* to break them. And when the break comes, tentatively, it is toward some happy recollection, the tragedy intervening when this is snatched away and the lines close in once more.

A year earlier Williams had called Lowell a "tiger" behind the "bars" of rhyme (the zoo, in this case, being traditional verse forms). "More and more," writes Hamilton, "Lowell was inclined to learn from Williams." Lowell, in a letter to Williams, stated as much himself: "Still I wish rather in vain that I could absorb something of your way of writing into mine."

The critical failure of *The Mills* deeply affected Lowell—so much so that he wrote little poetry during the next few years. He seemed to be rethinking his whole approach to his craft. After his mother's death in 1954, Lowell left Italy for Marlborough Street in Boston, very near the house in which he spent his childhood. During a short teaching stint at the University of Cincinnati, Lowell delivered a most curious lecture on Hitler, "more or less extolling the superhuman ideology," in Hamilton's words. In fact, Lowell was "speeding up" again, and shortly after this incident he had a severe breakdown. As part of his therapy, Lowell was given, for the first time, a new drug called Thorazine. Hamilton reports that the drug's side effects make its takers appear "sluggish, dazed, somnambulistic."

Given this clinical fact, it is scarcely surprising that Lowell was unable to complete many poems during this period in his life. But he does undertake, as part of his new therapy, a prose autobiography. In the generous selections Hamilton makes available (Lowell's draft remains unpublished), we see a noticeably "looser" Lowell discussing, in the most raw and "immediate" style he has yet achieved, the devastating experience of mental illness.

> I began to talk aimlessly and loudly to the room at large. I discussed the solution to a problem that had been bothering me about the unmanly smallness of the suits of armor that I had seen "tilting" at the Metropolitan Museum. "Don't you see?" I said, and pointed to Anna, "the armor was made for *Amazons!*" But no one took up my lead. . . . Nobody paid any attention to me.

It is difficult to say with certainty how much Lowell's new "aesthetic," as evidenced in this excerpt from the draft autobiography, was abetted by Thorazine. Whatever the case, in March 1957 (two years after starting work on the autobiography) Lowell had developed, in his own words, a further "disrespect for tight forms. If you could make it easier by just changing the syllables, then why not?" Following a reading trip to the West Coast, where he encountered the beat poets who were pursuing ideas very similar to his, Lowell began work on new poems. By October he finished eleven of them, "turned into free verse," Hamilton relates, "from a first draft in couplets." Lowell sent the new work to his new mentor, William Carlos Williams, with a letter in which he stated: "I see I forget to say that I feel more and more technically indebted to you, growing young in my forties!" Lowell also sent the manuscript to Allen Tate. Now clearly repudiated, Tate wrote back:

> *All* the poems about your family, including the one about you and Elizabeth, are definitely *bad* . . . the poems are composed of unassimilated details, terribly intimate, and coldly noted, which might well have been transferred from the notes from your autobiography without change.
>
> The free verse, arbitrary and without rhythm, reflects this lack of imaginative focus.

Tate even wondered if the new poems were the prelude to another manic spell. He turned out to be right. A few days later Lowell was admitted to the Boston Psychopathic Hospital.

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Life Studies, the book in which this new work appeared, was published in 1959. Lowell focused his new "terribly intimate" eye on, among other things, his (evidently) difficult marriage, his father ("91 Revere Street" is about knocking him down), and the literary figures he felt close to at the time. Lowell's coldness, as Tate put it, often reads more like a form of emotional deadness. As for the free verse, there is little question that it is "arbitrary," to use one of Tate's words again, but at the same time it never strikes us as purely undigested or lacking in concentration. And as much as Lowell bemoaned, in another letter to Williams, "the apparatus of logic and conceit and even set subjects," he by no means gave up entirely on any of these. What was gone forever was the grand Miltonic style Lowell had achieved in *Lord Weary's Castle*. "You speak more to us," Williams assured Lowell.

The high praise that greeted *Life Studies* must have finally convinced Lowell that he was on the right track. As the decade of the sixties began, the Lowells decided to view the proceedings from the vantage point of Sixty-seventh Street in New York City rather than that of Marlborough Street in Boston. They moved, with their three-year-old daughter, Harriet, in 1961. But the "wild electric beauty" of New York provided no haven for Lowell's sickness. During the next two years Lowell was wracked by more mental episodes, and he left Hardwick for a time. Still, in 1963 he gathered together the poems for his next book, *For the Union Dead*. The work in this volume for the most part consists of recastings of other writers' prose: letters from Elizabeth Bishop, essays by Jonathan Edwards, etc. Now and again Lowell revamps his own earlier poems. He seems even more relaxed with respect to the construction of his poems, as well as in his emotional regard for his subjects. Everyone now supplies fodder for his poetic canon. The man who wrote "Where the Rainbow Ends," in *Lord Weary's Castle*, is someone Lowell might never have known—might even have refused knowing.

But the greatest change in *For the Union Dead* is its political topicality. The title poem expresses, as Lowell said in an interview he gave a few years later, his "pious . . . [but] very bitter feelings" about America. These sentiments foreshadow, over the next few years, Lowell's participation in the civil rights movement and anti-war activism. Times were changing, and Lowell found himself at the cutting edge. When he declined a White House invitation in 1965 and used the occasion to make a public statement against the war, it became front-page news. In many ways, this incident, like his decision to march on the Pentagon two years later, was a way of acting out his poetic dissent, which in turn was an extension of his personal revolt against his family.

In one form or another, these public events crept into Lowell's *Near the Ocean*, published in 1967. The book also included a number of his idiosyncratic but interesting translations. The fact is, Lowell knew well few of the languages from which he translated. He simply considered the original verse so much booty to be plundered as an excuse for his own poetic expression. It was the identical attitude Lowell had toward conversations, poems, private actions—indeed, the whole world. "You can say anything in a poem—if you *place* it properly," he declared at the time.

In 1967 *Notebook* appeared. The book was literally a diary of unrhymed sonnets that Lowell would perpetually revise (it remained the source of all his future books). The first new version came out in 1968. These "sonnets" are, almost without exception, chunks of unprocessed prose, often of an obscure, intransigently personal meaning. As usual, private conversations and letters are used freely in the poems. When historical details or people are discussed, the details float in a free-associational vacuum. There are, nonetheless, a few diamonds in this rough—Lowell did not lose his ability to write great isolated lines—but they remain unintegrated. With the popularity, at the time, of theories of disposable or constantly changing art, it is no surprise that Lowell was praised as a poet in the forefront of the new aesthetic.

In the same year, Lowell was taken off Thorazine and put on a new drug called lithium carbonate. Its users, Hamilton reports, tend to appear "suspended, uninvolved, disinclined to 'follow through' their feelings." Regardless of Lowell's new treatment, he was still prone to attacks and breakdowns. He and Elizabeth Hardwick finally divorced in 1972. During this time Lowell worked on the poems

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that would appear in three books published the following year: *For Lizzie and Harriet*, *The Dolphin*, and *History*. Comprised largely of revisions of the *Notebook* poems, Lowell goes a step further by making unprecedented use of some desperate and vulnerable letters written by his distraught wife during the breakup of their marriage. Lowell's fervently pursued ideal of an exact correspondence between art and life reaches its cruel and tasteless conclusion in the mockery of Elizabeth Hardwick that is implicit in these poems.

Before Lowell published these books, Elizabeth Bishop warned him that *"art just isn't worth that much."* Lowell never adequately explained to Elizabeth Bishop why he chose to publish them; in fact, he never adequately attempted to explain it to anyone. Ian Hamilton chooses not to speculate on the question. And in Lowell's last book, *Day by Day*, published in 1977, the year of his death, he only writes: "We were asked to be obsessed with writing/and we were." Having observed the noble calling of poetry degenerate, in Lowell, into a form of abuse, the lines lose their intended Romantic effect. In the light of Lowell's late career, it reads like no more than a poor excuse.

What the foregoing chronology of the life and career of Robert Lowell omits is that which constitutes a sizable bulk of Hamilton's book: the unspeakably sad narrative of Lowell's lifelong struggle with insanity. Nothing quite prepares the reader for the shock and horror of this. The fits of violence (he broke Jean Stafford's nose twice), the abusive telephone calls, the cold imperiousness to his friends and family, the handcuffs, the jails and the mental clinics—each episode more terrible, and more difficult to read, than the last. Interestingly, there are few remarks by Lowell himself on his illness (apart from the selections from the draft autobiography). But when he does speak of it, he is chillingly eloquent.

> The night before I was locked up I ran about the streets of Bloomington Indiana crying out against devils and homosexuals. . . . I suspected I was a reincarnation of the Holy Ghost. To have known the glory, violence and banality of such an experience is corrupting.

More often we are given the testimony of the friends and witnesses who suffered along with Lowell. Of these, Elizabeth Hardwick suffered the most and has the most to tell. Throughout, she does so with exemplary tact and evenness of tone. Reading her comments we cannot forget that all the details she provides must really only be a very small part of the whole sad story. As others who have written about this book have remarked, manic depression involves long, private, and, in the end, unconveyable silences.

Next to Elizabeth Hardwick's brave and forthright account, the tales of certain other people interviewed by Ian Hamilton seem shoddy in the extreme. Unlike Hardwick, these people forget Lowell's greatness as a poet, or are above mentioning it. There were, for example, the faculty members at the University of Cincinnati who believed that the insane Lowell "was behaving just as some of them hoped a famous poet would behave," or that "'mad' was . . . another mask of Lowell's genius," or that "his ranging eloquence [was a] sign . . . of a newly liberated spirit." Alongside such idiocy, Hardwick's wisdom and magnanimity seem all the more impressive.

That Hamilton has fashioned a rather disproportionate picture cannot be denied. But neither can the fact that he has done hard and valuable work in writing this book. Apart from his numerous interviews, he has read all the important letters to and from Lowell's friends and colleagues, chief among them Allen Tate, Elizabeth Bishop, John Berryman, and Randall Jarrell. He has also read the work of all these people as well, and immersed himself in the culture they helped create in the years after the war.

Hamilton's sparse critical remarks—clipped as they sometimes seem as a result of the book's factual emphasis—have an admirable objectivity about the uneven quality of Lowell's oeuvre. Though scarcely perfect in this regard, he shines when considered alongside most of his American counterparts. He understands, for example, that the "high rhetoric" of Lowell's early style "need not inflate or falsify"—a notion that is at odds with Lowell's later aesthetic position. However, he is less charitable than he should be toward "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" and tends, now and again, when discussing the later free-form poetry, to fall into the conventional trap of the critical proponents of avant-garde American poetry: namely, to point out a good rhythm

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"The funniest thing that ever happened in the printing shop of Jacques Vincent, according to a worker who witnessed it, was a riotous massacre of cats." So begins Robert Darnton's exploration of the violent rituals practiced by artisans in mid-18th century France. In a series of elegantly rendered essays, Darnton exhumes the strange and wonderful world views of the ordinary and extraordinary people inhabiting the cities, towns, and countryside of France in the Age of Enlightenment. Ranging from the grim folklore of the French peasantry to the romantic sensibilities binding Rousseau to his provincial readers, Darnton conveys ways of thinking and feeling long forgotten, administering a necessary and unforgettable dose of culture shock. $17.95

Walt Whitman

The Making of the Poet
Paul Zweig

This remarkable book provides us with the first convincing account of one of the great mysteries of American literature: the creative emergence of Walt Whitman during the 1850s. Until then, Whitman had been a run-of-the-mill political journalist; he had written mediocre poems and stories, and he seemed to promise nothing more. But then, around age 30, Whitman began to keep a notebook in which he wrote out experimental poems and lines of verse, and within five years he had produced *Leaves of Grass*, the most original book of poems ever written in America. These transforming years are the subject of Paul Zweig's fascinating book, which traces Whitman's upheaval from its origins. Central to Zweig's account is the duality of Whitman's purpose: the work of art was also a labor of self-making; the life and the work had to be one. In forging his unique voice, Zweig shows, Whitman also created a bardic voice for the new nation. $18.95 April

Hands and Hearts

A History of Courtship in America
Ellen K. Rothman

Hands and Hearts is a lively and authoritative account of courtship in American life during the last 200 years that vividly recreates the experiences of young Americans during courtship and the transition to marriage. Drawing on diaries, autobiographies, and personal correspondence, Ellen Rothman lets the young men and women tell in their own words what it was like to search for and find a mate in the two centuries since Independence. She reconstructs the "life cycle" of courtship, from the first expressions of affection to the private moments of avowal to the public exchange of vows. "No one can escape the appeal of the revealing writings Rothman has uncovered. . . . A real achievement." —CARL N. DEGLER, Stanford University $18.95 April

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here, a fine colloquialism there, and a touching, if wholly personal, allusion around back. (One might as well be criticizing a technical manual, if that's all poetry demands of the critic.) Still, when all is said and done, Hamilton is more rigorous than most have been when dealing with Lowell's poetry.

Nonetheless, one does feel that a large and significant part of Robert Lowell is missing from this biography. Where is the man who worked, when he wasn't sick, sixteen hours a day? Where is the poet who spent, as John Berryman related, one hundred hours on a single stanza of "Beyond the Alps"—only later to delete it? Where is Lowell's intellectual connection with all the books he read so voraciously? Nowhere, alas, in Hamilton's book.

When one has plowed through all the hospital reports, the number of policemen it took to subdue Lowell on this or that occasion, the accounts of Lowell's endless rantings about Hitler and Christ, the revelations of various girl friends (such as the one from Cambridge who found Lowell "wasn't crazily sort of sexy at all. He was very huggy"), one is left less with a chronicle of an important poet with a powerful sense of poetic vocation than with a sad madman who made life hell for everyone around him—and not least for himself. After all this, it is difficult to remember that Robert Lowell was also an artist, and that the appreciation of an artist begins, not with voyeurism, but with his art.

A Family in History

REMARKABLE RELATIONS: THE STORY OF THE PEARSALL SMITH WOMEN. *By Barbara Strachey. Universe Books. $15.95.*

Reviewed by SONYA RUDIKOFF

What does it mean to be part of a family? How does one organize that disorganized pageant of antecedents and descendants? In some families, there are informal theories about the persistence of traits, the dominance of one strain over another, the characteristics that may skip a generation. England, of course, has been preeminently the place for such inquiries, with its highly articulate, educated middle classes, their close relationships and acute observations, and, above all, their habit of writing letters, diaries, and memoirs. They also sketched and painted in watercolors and experimented with photography, leaving a domestic legacy of endearing value—all those scenes of uncles and aunts in the oval library, cousins at tea in the garden, a little boy on a pony in front of the wych elm.

A member of one of those English families of highly competent and articulate people, Barbara Strachey inherited a "vast and fascinating family archive," and she has written a most interesting book about these inherited traits and characteristics. Her mother, Ray Strachey, the feminist, her grandmother, Mary Berenson, wife of Bernard Berenson, and her great-grandmother, Hannah Whitall Smith, Philadelphia Quaker, provided more than twenty thousand letters, countless diaries, scrapbooks, photograph albums, and other papers. Their descendant, now in her seventies, undertook the prodigious effort of organizing this material and integrating it with her own knowledge and memories. The remarkable relations of Barbara Strachey are, in fact, the women of the Pearsall Smith family in their relations with one another. Although some of them have already figured prominently in studies of Berenson, Bloomsbury, Bertrand Russell, and of feminism, Quakerism, or Evangelicalism, here they are on a different stage, a family stage. The author had the project in mind for many years, apparently regarding it as the responsibility of a survivor—as a family trust. The ruling idea, stated early in her book, is that one of the family's "most noticeable characteristics" was its "matriarchal nature," in which "descent" ran from mother to daughter. Barbara Strachey's point of view is that of the eldest daughter of the eldest daughter of the eldest daughter. She inherited not only all those papers, but a tradition she was proud to affirm and maintain. She herself did not have a daughter, however, so that particular line of remarkable women is not to go on.

There was already a legend of indomitable Whitall women when Hannah Whitall married Robert Pearsall Smith in 1851. They were birthright Quakers in that secluded old Quaker community of earnest believers and

SONYA RUDIKOFF is currently working on a study of Virginia Woolf and language.

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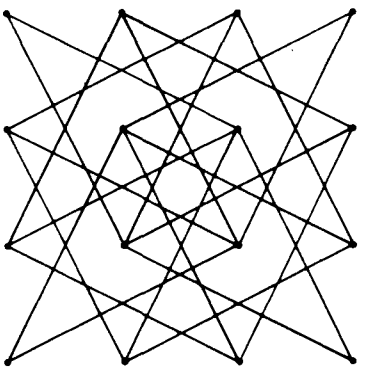
prosperous merchants in Philadelphia. The young couple took their spiritual lives seriously in a time of general awakening and questioning; Methodists and Plymouth Brethren, as well as other healers, could affect them as powerfully as Quakerism. They both experienced passionate revelations about sin and forgiveness when they would shake in sobs or would feel flooded with a sense of glory and redemption. They prayed; they followed mind and spirit cures and water cures; they started religious periodicals and composed inspirational tracts.

Photographs of Robert Smith show a likeness to some of the powerful charismatic figures of that American scene. He was an intense, nervous man, whose unstable passions provoked mysterious transports in those around him—a typical "soul-stirring preacher." Hannah, a handsome young woman with her own cautious intensity, also became a preacher and a religious guide and writer: her book, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, sold well over two million copies and is still in print. Three of her six children died, but she summoned the strength of Whitall ancestors to meet her trials. When her volatile husband broke down and was ordered to take the then-standard trip abroad for his health, Hannah went too. When he abandoned himself to prayer breakfasts and to the vertiginous life of the English revivalists, Hannah joined him. But it was in her misgivings, her resistance, and her steadfast control of the family that her character of a Whitall woman was both strengthened and delineated.

Like an American family out of Henry James's imagination, lively and spiritually hungry, they confronted late Victorian England and were transformed. Their Quakerism survived fitfully, because by the 1870s they were swept up in the new currents of thought and feeling. Introduced to the world of aristocratic English Evangelicals, the Smiths became part of Lady Mount Temple's circle at Broadlands, and both of them preached to the multitudes regularly gathered there. Large gatherings inspired Robert to intense flights of religious oratory, and the reverence of tumultuous crowds persuaded him that all Europe was at his feet. Acclaimed by more than eight thousand at the Brighton Convention of 1875, his fame, like that of



The Analytic Art

by Francois Viète,

Translated by T. Richard Witmer

Described by historians of mathematics as "the greatest of all the French mathematicians of the sixteenth century" and as "the true founder of modern mathematics," Francois Viète (1540-1603) stood chronologically between Cardano and Descartes. His most important work was in algebra, and the present volume consists of all his works in this field, plus a few other related writings, in their first English translation. *$45.00*

Transylvania

The Roots of Ethnic Conflict

Edited by John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi, and Louis J. Elteto

Variously controlled in recent times by Austria, Hungary, and Rumania, Transylvania typifies the problems associated with great power conflict, shifting cultural dominations, and ethnic group rivalries within a region. The essays in this book are important contributions to Eastern European studies and to the wider questions of inter-ethnic conflict. *$32.50*

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Moody, Sankey, and other preachers of the day, was intoxicating. Its very abandon sprung the fateful trap that was to collapse his entire religious mission, his health, and his life goals. For Smith had become persuaded of the doctrines of "Holy Love," a kind of spiritually inspired sensuality, relabeled but not sublimated. It was a very American—a very mid-nineteenth century—accommodation of the claims of spirit and flesh. It produced a scandal in England, shattering Smith's prophetic career.

Hannah, indomitable through it all, found her salvation in the family. Logan Pearsall Smith and his sisters, Mary (whose second husband was Bernard Berenson) and Alys (who married Bertrand Russell), and Mary's children, Ray and Karin, all knew their formidable relation as a passionately devoted mother and grandmother of unlimited loyalty. She gave herself to Mary's children, overseeing their education and entering into all their pursuits, even in her late sixties, with arthritis, in her white cap and black dress. Repeatedly tested by the impulsiveness of her husband and of Mary, chilled by the dislike of Russell and Berenson, tried by illness, financial uncertainty, and other losses, she endured everything. Her niece, Carey Thomas (who would become president of Bryn Mawr), noted that fierce devotion, and Hannah herself spoke of her own "untellable mother love." She disapproved of Mary but nevertheless wrote to her, "I am on *thy side* against the whole world, and even against myself, if this last could be possible." Indomitable and adaptable—did William James have this in mind when he called her the "Mother of Pragmatism"?

The Smiths were wealthy. Before they moved to England, they had lived a comfortable, even luxurious life in Germantown; and for holidays they went camping in the Adirondacks, Maine, or the West, like other adventurous, prosperous families of the day. They entertained everyone—there were Mary's friends from Smith College and, later, her friends and professors from the Harvard Annex (precursor of Radcliffe); there were Quaker relatives; Logan's friends; there was Walt Whitman from nearby Camden, who called Mary his "staunchest living woman friend"; there were temperance visitors and scientific friends and philosophers from abroad. It was an Oxford philosopher who captured the impulsive Mary in 1884. Their marriage in England, with a wedding breakfast presided over by Benjamin Jowett in the Hall at Balliol, inspired the Smiths to transfer their activities to an English setting so that Hannah could be near her favorite daughter. They settled in London, and in a large comfortable house in Sussex, and at once touched the center of advanced English life.

In London, Mary entertained Shaw, Graham Wallas, Sidney Webb, and other friends of her husband, and her doctor was Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, sister of Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the feminist, and one of the first women to practice medicine in England. In Sussex, Lady Russell, the widow of Lord John Russell, came to call, and her grandson, Bertie, fell in love with the beautiful Alys. The Smiths welcomed visitors of every sort, whether aristocrats, Evangelicals, English, or American. Bernard Berenson was one of those who appeared, a young American interested in art, who had known Logan and Mary slightly at Harvard. It was with him that Mary later went abroad to discover the Renaissance, leaving the children with her mother. In Italy, there were Vernon Lee, Roger Fry, the Jameses, the Trevelyans, Gilbert Murray, and Janet Ross, doyenne of the English colony, and innumerable others.

Logan, the belletrist writer, never married. Alys, who married Russell in 1894, had no children. Mary had no children with Berenson, but had two girls from her first marriage. Ray married Oliver Strachey, brother of Lytton, James, and the rest, a colonial administrator in the Anglo-Indian tradition of the Strachey family. Karin married Adrian Stephen, son of Leslie Stephen and brother of Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf. Obviously, the Whitall traits could not by definition descend intact to any of the ostensibly "Whitall women," although Mary professed to see them in Ray and again in Barbara as a baby. Male members of the family displayed those Whitall traits too. Few Smiths make an appearance in the story—were there no "remarkable relations" among them?—and few Whitall cousins, except for Carey Thomas. Their lives might have demonstrated the fate of the Whitall determination when matched with traits other than those of the Smiths, but this range of possibilities was not pursued. In

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any case, the entire sample was far too small to encourage generalizations.

The Whitall determination and the Smith emotionality might also have foundered or exhibited a different fate without the incalculably significant presence of money. Here was a question worth the attention of Graham Wallas and Sidney Webb. Income from the prosperous Quaker forebears—meetinghouse *and* countinghouse—enabled the elder Smiths to promote their Evangelical careers and to embark on their missions. The income from the successful family glass business carried them to England, instead of keeping them in America promoting the business. Income from various family inheritances secured their life in London and the country. Allowances facilitated Mary's odyssey with Berenson, eased Logan's rejection of business and grounded his career, supported Ray's feminism and Karin's psychoanalytic training. The improvidence and extravagance that marked Robert Smith's life, and Mary's as well, were cushioned by distance from the creation of the capital that provided them with income.

As the Smiths' fortunes waxed and waned, Bertrand Russell extended loans. So did the once-impoverished student Berenson ("B. B."). Launched by Mrs. Jack Gardner's money and swept on by his own talents, he began to make a great deal of money of his own during the practice of connoisseurship. Not only did he and Mary create a splendid and luxurious life at I Tatti, but he generously supplied houses and allowances to his own family and hers. By 1931, the world economic problems threatened to destroy that life, but they managed to go on after all. Alys, long separated from Russell, lived on comfortably with Logan, entertaining friends and relatives in London and in the country, pursuing various interests. The part played by unearned income in this entire Pearsall Smith story was apparently substantial. Even the delicacy of B. B.'s financial arrangements would merit further attention.

One of the most indomitable of the family was Karin Stephen, Mary's younger daughter. As a child, she felt she was not the important one, and, as her mother's letters indicate, she was right. It was her sister who was preferred and worried about, who enchanted everyone.

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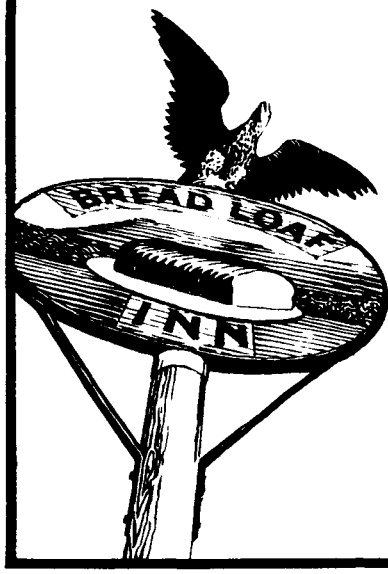

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Karin was lonely and unhappy, suffering from ear trouble; she endured five operations before she was eighteen. Nobody's favorite, she was instructed to mute her own sufferings in order not to upset her very emotional mother out at I Tatti. Fortunately for her own survival, Karin was remarkably intelligent and won Russell's professional respect. In 1911 at Newnham, she took a First in her tripos, with distinction in philosophy, the first time such an honor had been won by a woman.

Karin's marriage to Adrian Stephen followed her own immersion in the world of Stracheys and in a spirited life with Cambridge friends and young men produced by Aunt Alys and Uncle Bertie. Adrian's sisters were not kind—that relationship showed Vanessa and Virginia at their worst—and the marriage was troubled; but both Karin's determination to study medicine and become a psychoanalyst and her intellectual triumphs reflect the family traits. She had persistent ear trouble, resulting in deafness; she had a further ear operation in her thirties that left her with partially paralyzed facial nerves; she was in conflict with the entire psychoanalytic establishment in London, where Ray's relatives, James and Alix Strachey, seemed so secure. She endured all of it, despite the lack of that strengthening maternal loyalty reserved for the favorite daughter.

Alys, too, had a kind of determination in her relations with Russell, even pathetically cherishing the attachment through all the years that followed their separation and divorce. Nearly forty years later, when he was seventy-eight and she eighty-three, she was still preserving and nourishing their early dream. She was another one who failed to be the favorite, but whose determination was not undeveloped. Logan Pearsall Smith was not a favorite either, and Alys tended and attended him for thirty-five years, out of loyalty and family feeling. Perhaps it was even a tribute to his own loyalty to her; he had broken with his close friend, Philip Morrell, when Russell and Lady Ottoline Morrell became lovers. These three feared scandal and the damage to their careers, and they were quite willing to sacrifice Alys.

Logan persevered in his *Trivia*, in his social life, gossip, practical jokes, and fin de siècle taste, until his death at the age of eighty-one. Other family traits stayed with him, too, or flourished anew: the depression, paranoia, euphoria, and mania that were an equally significant part of the Smith inheritance. His father had warned him about the Smiths who "suffered beyond description" from that "fearful curse of our inheritance of NERVES." Logan, however, showed the same strength, intensity, and conviction that Mary did when she worked with B. B., traveled back and forth between Florence and London, raced up and down Italy, created I Tatti, or dashed off to America. Perhaps she had the more powerful will, energy, and abandon; perhaps it was endurance as she entertained, lectured, bought and sold Italian pictures, wrote all those letters, embarked on flirtations, or took up matchmaking. All three of the Pearsall Smiths lived into their eighties. Was one of them more tenacious, another more persistent, a third more coercive than the others?

Whether to call these characteristics of the Pearsall Smiths peculiarly American, to see them all as a Jamesian family confronting and conquering the Old World with their energy, intelligence, and money, is a complex question. In at least one respect, they do not seem quite to exemplify the late nineteenth century Americans of James's perspective. That is, after their initial encounters with English life, when Hannah Whitall Smith would write back to Philadelphia her interested and acute observations of English life, commenting on the politicians and thinkers and aristocrats of her new milieu, the family seemed to have become simply as English as anyone else. Their friends were English, their involvements were with life in England and Europe, even though Alys, and, later, Karin, would spend time at Bryn Mawr, and Logan would choose Johns Hopkins for medical treatment as Karin chose Baltimore for psychoanalytic work. The Anglo-American *problem* did not characterize them.

B. B. hardly seemed to be American after he came abroad, and certainly not as the renowned connoisseur, unless the entire complex artifact of his work, his taste, and life at I Tatti is to be considered a supreme American *opera*. He, too, was indomitable—did he catch some of that Whitall trait from Mary?—and in fact all those associated with the Pearsall Smiths were marked by some form of determination and will, or so it would appear as

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their stories are recounted against the entangled and cluttered stories of their time.

Still, the world these Americans entered in late Victorian England was a small one, and their energies readily brought them into connection with everyone. Their perseverance, their obdurate, resistant individuality, their passions and pursuits—all found ample expression and exercise. These flowers did not blush unseen, nor these gems glow unnoticed in dark unfathomed caves of ocean. Do the family traits account sufficiently for what happened to them, or would another conceptual structure illuminate more of the story?

Preparations for Immortality

MARCEL PROUST: SELECTED LETTERS, 1880–1903. *Edited by Philip Kolb. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Doubleday. $19.95.*

Reviewed by EUGEN WEBER

A young homosexual living in Paris, just a hundred years ago, writes letters to family and friends. The letters begin when he is nine years old, and they are about holidays, books, music, gifts, clothes, men, women, getting invited to parties or plays or private poetry readings, and also increasingly about his own health: how he sleeps (or cannot sleep), or tosses and turns, how he feels when he wakes and what he takes for breakfast, how he digests (or cannot digest), and what medicines he takes. They are about intrigues, about maneuvers to get essays printed, books published, plays staged, about affairs of the heart, gossip, flirting, tiffs, and reconciliations.

The young man is more than a fatuous ninny. He writes well though gaudily, and he knows it, and he shows it; he has the sense to conceal wide—and ever wider—reading behind the pose of a poseur, the sensibility required of social butterflies, the exquisite manners that make him a valued guest; his conversation is a rhetorical embroidery. He does not stint his praise of others, outrageous compliments, egregious flattery, perhaps in

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hope of being repaid in kind, perhaps because flattery is a form of courtship and he is a courtier born, his sycophantic facility to divert concealing sharp critical faculties. The courts that he attends and, mostly, conquers are the salons of demimondaines and duchesses and literary mandarins like Anatole France and Alphonse Daudet, the dinner tables of Paris society—a *monde* that seems at times to count as all the world to him. Why should it not when, out of the ashes of recollection, as of a small dry heap of tea leaves, whole worlds can billow? We know that, eventually, they will do just that under the pen of Marcel Proust, still in the chrysalis stage when he writes these letters; and that accounts for the interest of these sometimes uninteresting communications, intelligently selected by the editor of all of Proust's correspondence, Philip Kolb, and sensitively translated by Ralph Manheim.

Another reviewer has described the present collection as a study in the gestation of genius. And yet, the genius-to-be seems trifling by 1903, when the selection ends with Proust already in his thirties, some of his earliest writings published and much more on the stocks, but with little to show except the firefly talent of a dilettante.

As in all period letters, we catch brief glimpses of social history: the installation in 1888 of a water closet in the Prousts' Paris apartment ("Victoire said it was a scream, she can't imagine what it could be used for"); the appearance in 1896 of "our dear little telephone" ("What remorse for having despised, disdained, rebuffed such a benefactor!"); the Breton village in 1895 where no paper can be found, from which a letter to Paris takes three days—less than it does today; the stockings ladies used to pad out their bodices ("One could see their bosoms, they were like the insides of a trunk!"); the dreadful gaffes one could commit in placing Rochefoucaulds, who were only counts, *after* Wagrams, princes, but of imperial vintage merely ("They've put a hundred years before a thousand," the Comte cried out. "I don't say they shouldn't invite those people, I say they shouldn't invite me"); the life of the upper classes, at least those among them who, like Proust, did not have to work for a living ("If you want to tell me what to give the chambermaid, writing will not do, you must wire *immediately!*").

The young man hesitates between careers ("In my most desperate moments I have never conceived of anything more horrible than a law office") or, rather, between possible sinecures that would allow him to concentrate on literature and philosophy; and he ends as an unpaid assistant librarian at the Bibliothèque Mazarine, an ideal post from which he at once obtains sick leave, and from which he would be automatically dismissed five years later, never having set foot on the Quai Conti. By that time, his physical nature (asthma, hay fever, and a predisposition to chills) had permitted his spiritual nature to affirm itself. Even his father, the eminent medical man, admitted that Marcel could not be expected to function like anybody else; and his mother's attempts to control his eccentric routine produced paroxysms of reproachful ire:

Saturday evening 6 December 1902

My dear little Mama,
Since I can't speak to you, I'm writing to tell you that I fail to understand you. You could guess, if you don't know, that from the time I come in I cry all night, and not without reason; and all day long you say things to me like: "I couldn't sleep last night because the servants were up and about until eleven o'clock." I would be only too glad if that were what prevented me from sleeping! Today, because I was suffering, I committed the crime of ringing for Marie (to bring me my asthma powders) who had come and told me she had finished her lunch, and you punished me, as soon as I had taken my Trional, by making people shout and hammer nails all day. Thanks to you, I was in such a state of nerves that when poor Fénelon came with Lauris I flew at him, because of something he had said—something very disagreeable, I admit—(Fénelon, not Lauris) with my fists. I didn't know what I was doing. I picked up the new hat he had just bought, stamped on it, tore it to shreds, and finally ripped out the lining. In case you think I'm exaggerating, I enclose a piece of the lining, so you can see I'm telling the truth. But don't throw it away. I want you to return it to me in case he can still make use of it.

These lines alone, and their continuation, for they go on and on, may make the book worth owning. And if you think that you can save $19.95 because you have read them already here, consider that there are many more passages just as preposterous, including a note to Alfred Vallette, who would soon publish Proust's translation of Ruskin's *Bible of Amiens:* "I wrote to you on receiving [your] telegram. . . . But I am sure I forgot to post the

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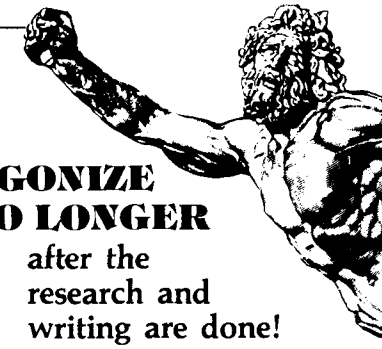
letter, though I'm quite unable to find it. So I don't know whether I may not have posted it without thinking," and so on.

By that time, 1902, the Proust we expected is beginning to take shape. He lies in bed, drunk with reading Emerson. He inquires who wrote *The Brothers Karamazov* (that's in 1897, and Dostoevsky soon became his favorite writer). He writes discriminatingly about Wagner, whom he does not swallow whole. He explains his friend and lover, the musician Reynaldo Hahn, in terms that apply to himself: "His attitudes, believe me, are not the fruit of his theories, his theories, as always, are his marvellously agile mind's justification of his temperament." He describes sunrise as a more charming inversion of the sunset, the church at Vézelay as a delicious Christian mosque, the chrysanthemums he sends to Laure Hayman as sad because everything is so stupid, and life as something in which every pleasure has to be paid for, without even being enjoyed. He gets up at two or three or four in the afternoon, goes out at five to be shaved, consumes mysterious powders, smokes anti-asthma cigarettes, catches a chill in August when he leaves off a second pair of drawers (or a second thick jersey in bed at night), bombards his mother with bulletins: "Don't blame my hay fever on constipation, because on the contrary . . . my bowels have been loose." "I had to get up a second time to go to the lavatory, and I couldn't find my safety pin—the one I use to close and tighten my drawers. Naturally, the night was over for me, there was nothing to hold my stomach."

He points out that literary work "makes constant demands on those emotions that are connected with suffering." Of course, "many people suffer as much or more and manage to work all the same. Then we hear that they have been stricken . . . and had to stop work. Too late, I preferred to do it ahead of time." Brave or foolhardy, he ignores the dangers that lie in wait for his stomach or lungs, and dines out regardless ("Eating out is my Evian, my travel, my summer resort"). The figures that fill *Remembrance of Things Past* begin to trip through these pages and are marvelously explained in handy footnotes: the Comtesse Greffulhe (Duchesse de Guermantes) and the actual château de Guermantes at Lagny (Seine-et-Marne), the Comte de Montesquiou



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(Baron de Charlus), Laure Hayman (Odette), and many more. So do episodes that will figure in his volumes, like the steady glance down a lady's corsage, or the demolition of Fénelon's hat.

Gradually, perhaps because we know who Marcel Proust would be, signposts appear to what Edmund Wilson described, not very approvingly, as "the pure intelligence playing luminously all about." Proust had written, tongue in cheek, that philosophy makes one take other people's unhappiness almost as much for granted as one's own. Yet his real selfishness did not prevent him from feeling the tragedy of Captain Dreyfus ("the cruelty to ask the exhausted Dreyfus to make another effort to be brave"), and from trying to proselytize among domestic servants who had to be reassured that, even after the "shameful verdict" of 1899 that found him guilty for a second time, Dreyfus was *not* a traitor; or from detesting anti-Semitism ("frightful materialism": how could intellectuals account for character and genius by physical characteristics or race?); or from criticizing the excesses of contemporary anti-clericalism ("I don't care for the Jesuit spirit. But just the same there is a Jesuit philosophy, a Jesuit art, a Jesuit pedagogy. Will there ever be an anti-clerical art?"). The whole long letter, written in July 1903, is—as the guidebooks say—worth a detour.

Marcel will not get angry with Dreyfus's detractors—loathing is not a social virtue, and too many salons are contaminated by anti-Dreyfusism to be given up. Anyway, "one should never get angry except over unimportant things." But the letters after 1898, like *Remembrance* itself, are also a guide to the socio-political tortuosities of a complicated time. The precious, petulant child reveals his other self.

But, then, there were so many selves to choose from: the spoiled but adoring son and brother; the appreciator of "our good general" Boulanger, however vulgar and tub-thumping the man on his black horse appeared ("this enormous, unforeseen enthusiasm, so *romantic* in the midst of our humdrum monotonous existence"); the playboy reporting a liaison with a pretty girl, "for the greater good of the *café-concerts* and other places . . . where one takes this sort of person"; the decadent (but not "one of the run-of-the-mill decadents of our day") dazzled by poems that make one's heart stop, and one doesn't know why; the admirer of Ruskin's aesthetic socialism (which the mature skeptic was to scorn); the moral student of politics (which his Marquis de Norpois would, in due course, reveal as hollow verbiage); the theorist who compared theoretical works to goods still carrying their price tag; the painter of the modern world that Baudelaire had called for, who etched and glorified the trivial in heroic detail.

The one consistent interest that these letters reflect is that of human relations, not all of them homosexual, but conducted with a sensibility, a susceptibility, and an occasional fickleness that one is tempted to describe as wholly feminine, especially when men were involved, as they most often were. Still a *lycéen*, the young Marcel quotes Socrates and Montaigne (he's wrong about the latter!) to argue that "sensual and intellectual friendships are, for a young man with a keen sense of beauty, better . . . than affairs with stupid and corrupt women." For all that, he adds, "Don't call me a pederast, it hurts my feelings."

This need both to affirm and conceal marks his attitude, which is divided between inclination and convention. The first is reflected in the wooing of a whole string of brilliant and attractive men, from Hahn and Montesquiou to Bertrand de Fénelon and Prince Antoine Bibesco, the second in the precautions that he took, not only in real life but in his writings, to disguise his predilections. Guilt and precaution, on the one hand, and, on the other, resolute enjoyment of "sweet and impotent kisses" mark a great number of letters. A special, private language is invented: *mosch*, *moschant* (reminiscent of musk, of *mouches*, flies, but also of *moche*, ugly, and of *méchant*, wicked), *salaist* (from the name of Count Antoine Sala, an overt homosexual), "silence tomb," for matters that should not be talked about . . .

Proust declares that public denunciations of salaism must be stopped; he explains that he owes it to his family not to let himself be taken for one; he protests that he is not one, and that his thoughts on the subject are of extreme severity. And yet, "philosophical curiosity about persons" remains strong: "Dreyfusist, anti-Dreyfusist, Salaist, anti-Salaist, are just about the only things worth

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knowing about an imbecile." One may suppose that experience of the homosexual's ambiguous situation informed the author's fascination with ambiguity and the insistent message found in *Remembrance of Things Past* that people and things are not always what they seem.

And so, the persistence of the reader (not difficult to maintain) and the discrete erudition of the editor reap their reward. The figure we had expected to discover achieves full, complex contour. Gradually—or does one imagine it? —the sentences have grown longer and more inclined to switchback, the self-indulgence has been disciplined into a style, the eloquent gossip has been turned into art, the convolutions have been tamed into design: literary expressions of the contemporary *style nouille*, never infelicitous, ever graceful. The combination of infallible intelligence and remanent puerility seduces and fascinates. The man who doesn't "begin to exist till four o'clock" has completed his preparations for immortality.

Just Imagine!

THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION: ENLIGHTENMENT TO ROMANTICISM. *By James Engell, Harvard University Press. $16.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR KRYSTAL

We take the imagination for granted. Not troubling to define or explain it, we allow almost reflexively that it is what contemporary poets and statesmen want more of. Tacit agreement regarding its usage is clearly the rule. But this concert of opinion was not always the case, as James Engell tells us in overwhelming detail in *The Creative Imagination.*

From 1740 to 1820 the idea of the imagination was anatomized and reconstructed, bisected and trisected, embroidered and inflated, and variously offered up as a panacea for all human and metaphysical ills, as the summum bonum of mankind, and as the one true path to God, nature, and art. The imagination, so Engell declaims, replaced the Platonic-Aristotelian world order, formed "a hinge connecting the Enlightenment and Romanticism," and in effect "introduce[d] the modern era." Now whether the imagination had quite the vast and demonstrable influence Engell claims for it is arguable; what is not debatable, however, is the tremendous interest it generated. Surely there have not been many subjects about which so much has been written by so many in so short a time.

The intellectual bustle around the question of the imagination toward the latter part of the eighteenth century was, of course, inseparable from the philosophical fervor that swept the European capitals of learning. A farrago of epistemological, philological, social, and religious strategies flourished contemporaneously, often setting off and sometimes obscuring one another. An abbreviated list might include: Cartesianism; Berkeleian idealism; Leibniz's universal language; Locke's empiricism and Hume's skepticism (which laid the foundations for empirical psychology and associationism); the obsessions with Hellenism and the Orient; pietism; the apotheosis of Newton for having mechanized the universe; the propagation of *Volkspoesie*, individualism, and nationalism; the concern with progress, as well as with its repudiation—all of which attested to the final sloughing off of Renaissance and neoclassical beliefs.

The problem, then, in tracing the history of an idea through these interweaving schemes and meditations is knowing where to begin. Engell begins rightly, I think, with the "new philosophy [that] calls all in doubt." For Donne and his generation, the Copernican revolution had indeed put the world "all in peeces, all cohaerence gone." To establish what could not be doubted, Descartes embraced a methodology based on mathematics, but which ultimately rested on an intuitive syllogism. More significantly, in formulating an apodictic epistemology, Descartes presumed a dualism of thought and extension that would thereafter haunt both idealists and rationalists unwilling to admit division in "real" knowledge.

To contain the dualism, Enlightenment philosophers envisioned the world as a single system whose orderly and immutable laws could be derived empirically and properly applied to human affairs. The same reason

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that guided Descartes and Newton could thus validate the social sciences, psychology, and religion. But reason, it seemed, could also be used against itself. Strict empiricists reasoned that axiomatic, universally valid laws could not be logically demonstrated. For Locke, knowledge was at best an "association of ideas"; and Hume, a half century later, argued that causality was a psychological phenomenon, an expression of the "vivacity of our ideas." This emphasis on the connection of ideas as the matrix for both particulars and universals was later parlayed by the associationists into a sensibility overseen by the imagination.

Nor did complete faith in reason meet with the universal approval of less empirically minded thinkers. The cognitive laws debunked by Hume were also anathema to the pietists, for whom truth existed only in the emotion of genuine spiritual experience. Thus both the skeptic and the pietist—one by using logic to limit its own powers, the other by dismissing that power entirely—eased the entry of the imagination into mental life.

This was the situation confronting Kant when he set out to show how the mind could make synthetic a priori judgments about sense data that were necessarily valid. The dualism that lay at the core of any empirical epistemology had to be, if not logically expunged, then creatively joined in the mind, where the imagination was already waiting to take a role in the proceedings, though perhaps not as central a role as stipulated by Engell. Integral to all this theorizing about the fallibility and infallibility of reason was the idea that the mind was both an active and passive participant where knowledge was concerned—a view subliminally reflected in the division of the imagination into the plastic and the imitative.

All this has to be sketched in, as Engell does, before one can grasp the place assigned to the imagination during the late Enlightenment when, Engell notes, a man of learning in one thing was a man of learning in all things, when there existed among the disciplines (and among nations) what Samuel Johnson likened to "a community of mind." So if the imagination fascinated an eighteenth century English critic, his writings would likely be reviewed by a Scottish psychologist, a German poet, a French architect.

To be sure, the imagination was not exactly neglected before the eighteenth century. As the *nuntius* (messenger) in faculty psychology's theory of mind, the imagination mediated between sensation and judgment and could, if affected by strong stimuli, throw reason into a tizzy. Treated deferentially by such Renaissance philosophers as Montaigne and Bacon, it alarmed Burton and even elicited a cautionary warning from Spenser, who urged poets not to make a "monster of their fantasie." This wariness was later taken up by Johnson, who observed that were it not for the imagination, a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as in those of a duchess.

On a less visceral level, the imagination retained its Aristotelian meaning of "thinking with images." But neither the emotional nor visual connotation suggested the potent and meliorative powers the imagination would assume during the Enlightenment, when it became, in Engell's phrase, "a human reflex of God's creative energy." As such, it contained and explained sympathy, genius, originality, and poetry. It extended man's knowledge of the world, not by dismissing or overriding reason, but by enhancing it. By 1786, Sir Joshua Reynolds was only one of many who saw the imagination as "the residence of truth."

Engel's accomplishment, for which we ought to be grateful, is to disabuse us forever of the notion that the imagination was a Romantic invention or that its original function was connected with poetics. The fact is, before the turn of the eighteenth century, the imagination was mainly deployed in a philosophical, psychological, or social capacity—a point brought home by Engell's discussions of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Johnson; Bodmer, Wolff, Platner, Kant, Hamann; and the English and Scottish associationists: David Hartley, William Duff, Dugald Stewart, James Arbuckle, Francis Hutcheson, James Beattie, Archibald Alison, and Abraham Tucker.

Of those early works that deal with the imagination as a potential critical tool, Engell scans Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744), Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1762), Lord Monboddo's *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1773), and

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Gerard's *Essay on Genius* (1774)—works that enabled the imagination to become "the first artery joining philosophy and psychology with the arts and criticism." Eventually, these sundry ruminations would be collected by the English Romantics (Hazlitt, Coleridge, Wordsworth) and by the Sturm und Drang poets (Schiller, Goethe) and applied categorically to the arts.

Because everyone had something to say about the imagination, Engell sees connections everywhere. With evangelical fervor, he catalogues a hundred-year period of elaborate intellectual cross-pollination. Akenside borrowed from Locke and Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury, through Leibniz, "served as a velvet shoehorn for the revival of Spinoza, and later influenced Herder, Kant, and Schiller." Kant's construct of the transcendental imagination drew on the work of Wolff, Gerard, Sulzer, and Tetens. Hazlitt's ideas about the sympathetic imagination (a hair's breadth from Keats's negative capability) was derived from Hume, Gerard, Priestley, Beattie, and Tucker. Coleridge dipped into everyone's work and his famous distinction between fancy and imagination recalls Dryden, Addison, Akenside, and Johnson. After a while this meticulous genealogy, with its refinements and reincarnations, becomes, to put it gently, a bit busy. But Engell presses on, and when he says, as he does often with only the names changing, that theories of the imagination were relayed from Gerard to Tetens to Kant, baseball enthusiasts may be reminded of the old Chicago Cubs infield with the ball being whipped around from Tinker to Evers to Chance. This is said not as criticism but by way of a warning. Engell seems to have left no English, Scottish, or German philosophical stone unturned, and his necessary abridgments are not necessarily reductive.

The very comprehensiveness of the book, in fact, makes one puzzle over its omissions, of which I note three. There is only the briefest allusion to Rousseau and nary a word about Diderot. To say that French "literature and criticism . . . did not originate or develop the idea of the imagination in the same fashion nor to the same extent as that of England, Scotland, and Germany"—while true—does not, I think, justify the neglect shown by Engell. Surely Rousseau must be considered a proponent of the imagination in his *Confessions*, and the maxims in Book IV of *Emile* are suspiciously similar to certain associationist pronouncements. Kant knew Rousseau's work intimately, as did Goethe, and Wordsworth certainly echoes him. As for Diderot, didn't he claim at one point that "the model of nature is less grand than that conceived by the poet"? Hegel, too—again because this is a work of such magnitude—is given short shrift. Although the imagination per se does not figure in his system (an omission that does not keep Engell from invoking Leibniz), Hegel's synthesis of Kant's critical philosophy and post-Kantian strains of idealism requires, at least implicitly, an imaginative power on the part of consciousness. But on all other fronts, Engell satisfies, indeed gluts, and often one doesn't know whether to praise him for attempting so much or upbraid him for attempting too much.

If there is a problem with Engell's study, it is one of emphasis, not fact, though in a work of intellectual history this can amount to the same thing. Engell bears down so hard on the imagination's preeminence that it puts one slightly ill at ease. Was it indeed foremost in the minds of late eighteenth century thinkers? Ubiquity does not necessarily translate as paramount concern. What about such concepts as progress, knowledge, spirit, and the absolute? Even Engell's occasional demurrers seem perfunctory, as if he cannot credit the possibility of other doctrines competing against his own. When reading a book whose analytic emphasis is so consuming, one tends to forget that other mental faculties were also being animatedly discussed at that time, ways of thinking and designating that perhaps poached on the imagination's preserves. Consider this remark by Carlyle, for example: "If called to define Shakespeare's faculty, I should say superiority of intellect, and think I had included all in that."

That said, it is only fair to acknowledge that, despite the bewildering array of references to the imagination and Engell's exhortations on its behalf, the book never loses sight of the philosophical impetus that shaped the Enlightenment's interest in imagination. Ideas about the imagination figured in the attempt to annul the duality of consciousness and existence, of man and nature—an attempt that in significant respects foreshadowed the twentieth century's obsession with, and scientific appraisement of, the psyche.

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The Reader Replies

In Search of the New Criticism

Mr. Cleanth Brooks in his essay "In Search of the New Criticism" (Winter 1983/84) defends the New Criticism against those who, he claims, have misunderstood it. But if authors may not be the best judges of the effect of their works, so may critics not be, and I find "intentional fallacy" all over Mr. Brooks's explanation.

I don't think that many people would quarrel with Mr. Brooks's proposition that when we read attention must be paid to the text, and that other considerations—information about the author's life, for example—must take second place to what the text actually says. But it was not because New Critics read closely that many came to dislike it—it was because the critics chose texts that lent themselves to their kind of reading and excluded other texts. In the 1959 edition of *Understanding Poetry*, edited by Mr. Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, there were six poems by John Donne and not one single poem by Walt Whitman. What must this have led students to think? Clearly, Donne was a great poet, and Whitman not worthy of discussion. In the same edition there were five poems by W. H. Auden and only one short poem by Robert Burns.

The New Criticism promoted writing that offered a knotty text suitable for unraveling with the tools of analysis. Poetry of other kinds was ignored, and other ways of enjoying poetry were not taught. It made the reading of literature an exercise in "explication" that drove many intelligent students away from English studies. The New Criticism created a "canon" of literature that suits academic critics very nicely, and no one else at all. It made way for the present separation between critics and authors that appears to be unbridgeable.

Louis Simpson
Port Jefferson, New York

Cleanth Brooks replies: In his first paragraph Mr. Simpson shows that he still misconceives the meaning of "the intentional fallacy." It does not commit one to believe that the critic (or the reader) is inevitably a better judge than the poet of the meaning—let alone the effect—of the poet's work. A cursory knowledge of the history of literary criticism or even an hour in an average college classroom would reveal the absurdity of any such notion.

As for the rest of Mr. Simpson's reply: His case against the New Criticism comes down to a case against a textbook edited (with commentaries) by Robert Penn Warren and myself. That is all to the good, since the attack is leveled not at some nebulous and undefined entity, but at something concrete and specific. But he misconceives what we were trying to do and grossly exaggerates our ability to accomplish what he mistakes as our intended goal. He believes that our object was not to enable the freshman college student to read poems with greater comprehension, but to alter the established order of the canonical texts. To this end, so he thinks, we included a number of poems by John Donne, not because they extended the average student's conception of the uses and limits of figurative language, but because we wished to enhance Donne's reputation at the expense of that of Burns or Whitman.

So he cites a sort of box score from the "1959"—he must mean the 1960—edition: Donne 6, Auden 5, Burns 1, and Whitman 0.

Yet if he had consulted the first edition, he would have found: Donne 5, Auden 1, Burns 4, and Whitman 1; or if he had looked at the latest edition: Donne 5, Auden 6, Burns 1, and Whitman 4. I don't know what these figures prove, or whether they prove anything, but they do not prove Mr. Simpson's allegations as to our motives.

The truth is that we were not trying to produce an *anthology*, a collection of short masterpieces, but a manual designed to help students read poems with increased sensitivity and discrimination. Thus, we deliberately included, along with traditional selections, some poems that we regarded as rather difficult. We also included a few poems that we thought

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were flawed and even one or two downright failures. Most of all, we saw the book as an *introduction*. Students who got interested in poetry would, we hoped, go on to take other courses of a very different character or make explorations of their own.

In any case, Mr. Simpson gives too much credit to our power as subversives. He pays us this left-handed compliment at the cost of implying an almost sheeplike subservience on the part of the English faculties of our colleges and universities, not to mention an incredible docility in the students themselves. I can assure him that such was not the state of affairs in the forties and fifties, nor is it so today.

The Art of the Footnote

After nearly four decades of publishing works of scholarship at Princeton University Press, I should be a connoisseur of footnotes, and I want first to express my pleasure in reading G. W. Bowersock's cogent and witty article "The Art of the Footnote" in the Winter 1983/84 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. It would be bold of me to suggest that what I have to say here is a footnote to his footnoteless article, but I hope that my remarks will satisfy his requirement that a footnote should "justify or illuminate the text in some way," and that it be connected to but "more or less free" from the text itself.

Most footnotes are bibliographic references. The continual shifting of the eye from the text to the note interrupts the flow of thought and takes much of the pleasure from reading. This sacrifice is made presumably to reassure the reader that the text is solidly based on previous work, that statements in the text can be checked against the references, though few readers actually do that. I have heard it said that a gentleman never checks his colleagues' footnotes, but fortunately not all scholars are gentlemen, and some significant scholarly controversies have resulted from such checking. Bowersock cites the checking of Gibbon's footnotes by offended clergy. I could cite the 1973 book by Robert J. Maddox on the treatment of the Cold War by the New Left historians. The letters section of the October 1983 issue of the *American Historical Review* contains a similar debate. Other examples can be found, often (like those mentioned above) with ideological as well as scholarly overtones.

University presses, when seeking expert advice on manuscripts, ask questions like "Is the scholarship sound?" Frequently the response is a comment on the footnotes and the transcription of quotations, as if these matters constitute scholarship. The scholarship must of course be in the text, but the footnotes can be useful to university press editors and their advisors. Has the author used the appropriate sources? Does he or she command the languages that the subject requires? Are footnotes judiciously related to the text, or do they seem to be merely "for show"? Has the author used footnotes as a substitute for skill in textual organization? Is this footnote necessary?

Bowersock says that "both commercial and academic publishers have had a baleful influence on footnoters." They have required authors, "for budgetary reasons, to use endnotes instead of footnotes." This is true, and it is also true, as Bowersock says, that the computer has now made it easier to put footnotes at the foot of the page. I would argue that the placement of notes is a matter for judgment. Who is expected to read the book, and how will it be read? If it will be read only by scholars who will want the notes on the page, that's fine. If it is hoped that it will have a wider readership, only those notes that Bowersock calls superlative, that explain and illuminate, should be set as footnotes, and other notes can be at the back of the book (never at the ends of chapters, where they are hard to find). It is easy to distinguish the two types of notes in the text references, so that mere citations will not distract the reader while he or she will be alerted to substantive comments.

I believe that the most baleful influence on footnotes, and on the text too, has been the machinery of the Ph.D. dissertation as imposed by professors. The dissertation is intended, I understand, as an educational exercise. Often the writer is required to footnote virtually every statement, assuming ignorance on the part of his readers, though indeed the only readers may be professors. Then there is the obligatory opening chapter in which the writer reviews all previous writing on the subject to prove that he has read it. In addition, supervisors of dissertations often seem not to include style as a criterion, accepting abominably written theses on the basis of substance—as if substance and style were separable. Finally, university rules usually require the notes in a dissertation to be typed single-spaced at the foot of the page, where they are impossible to edit and where the publishers don't want them, whether or not they are to be at the foot of the page in printed form.

Thus, having been trained to a kind of writing that is not attractive to scholarly readers and not acceptable to publishers of scholarship, the young scholar is turned loose in a highly competitive academic environment in which publication is expected. Virtually all Ph.D. theses must be drastically reworked before publication; some university presses will not even look at unrevised dissertations. I have argued elsewhere that this situation

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could be rectified, with benefit to scholarship generally as well as to Ph.D. candidates, by expecting the thesis to be the first draft of a book or perhaps part of a book, and that a separate bibliographic essay be required, which might or might not eventually find its way into the published work in some form. Any university press editor can cite examples of scholarly works of inherently wide interest and importance, begun as dissertations, whose potential readership and influence have been seriously limited by their Ph.D.-ness.

In what I have said above I have assumed that scholarly writing is intended to be *read*, not simply *used*. I hope that this is true, but I fear that often it is not. Scholarship feeds upon itself, and one sometimes gets the impression that scholars do not *read* books but rather *use* them as grist for their own projects. Thus the importance of indexes, to help the scholar avoid reading the parts of a book that are not *useful* to him. I constantly sense this contradiction when as a publisher I seek books that are unified and coherent as wholes. Of course an index can be a genuine intellectual contribution if sensitively prepared by an author as a guide to his complex subject. The computer saves trouble by replacing the old card-file technique, but to the extent that it replaces analytic thought (which it can seem to do), it is retrograde. It encourages mere use.

Computers are performing miracles in libraries. If one wants to multiply footnote references, one has only to order a computer search for a sufficiently defined subject. This may be helpful, but many subjects, especially in the humanities, are not susceptible to the kind of classification that a computer can understand. Are we in danger of substituting computer printouts for reading? It is evident that the availability of photoduplicating machines in libraries has reduced the amount of reading that was necessary for intelligent note-taking.

The Library of Congress has closed its card catalogue, and all cataloguing is now on computer. It will soon install a miraculous optical disk device that will hold twelve thousand pages of full text per disk, to be called up on a screen or printed out as needed, in the library or at remote stations. We have the prospect, in a few years, of universal availability. There will be many problems in reaching this millennium, and it certainly will enhance the use of books, but what will it do to reading?

If these remarks were a footnote to Bowersock's article, I would be allowed a certain freedom to digress, although perhaps I have digressed too far. Let me return to "The Art of the Footnote." It seems to me that we are in danger of regarding books as material for footnotes. Every book is a construct from its footnotes and becomes a footnote in another book. In this scheme there is little room for art. Let us by all means revive the art of the footnote, which means also that we must preserve and revive the art of the book.

HERBERT S. BAILEY, JR.
Princeton, New Jersey

Stravinsky-Craft, Inc.

In "Stravinsky-Craft, Inc." (Autumn 1983), Joan Peyser gives further proof that she is one of our more penetrating musicologists and critics who possesses that rare combination of expertise and concinnity. Her analytic description of the relationship between Stravinsky and Craft does much to set the record straight. Hitherto, Craft had almost invariably been depicted as a parasitic gray eminence who had a malevolent influence upon the composer and his wife, while aggrandizing his own coffers and reputation.

Mrs. Peyser, without denying that Craft's latching on to the Stravinskys was self-serving, offers cogent evidence that the association benefited the composer considerably, who himself was not above using Craft for his own purposes. Apart from other fascinating aspects of the *ménage à trois*, we are shown to what lengths some will go to further their objectives. Yet sometimes, as in the case of Stravinsky and Craft, what emerges is a mutually enlightened self-interest. In fact, Max Stirner would have warmly embraced both men as shining exemplars of his belief in the egoistic pursuit of one's own goals, over and above all other concerns. He might well have pointed with pride to a relationship, entered selfishly, which resulted in a symbiosis wherein the well-being and creative powers of Stravinsky, and the station and fortune of Craft, were greatly enhanced.

Mrs. Peyser not only redresses the imbalance so as to give Craft his just due, but in providing an insight into a not uncommon situation among artists, she leads us to dig deeper, to a point where we recognize the mixed blessing: a blessing because we are the beneficiaries of what the artist produces as a consequence of the relationship; mixed because of the price it exacts from the protagonists. It is an insight that should make us slower to judgment.

RICHARD HUETT
Tarrytown, New York

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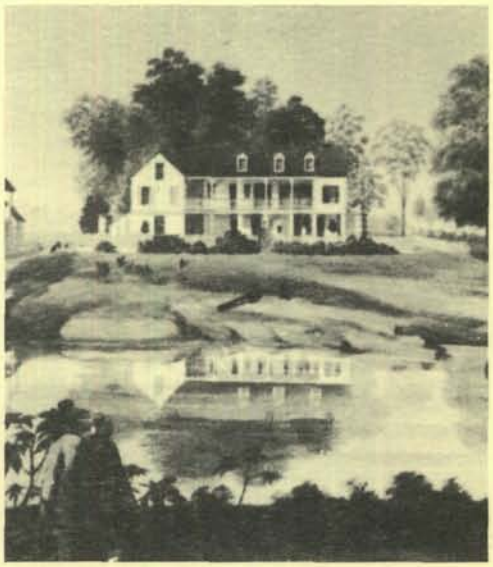

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